

Bellevue Community College



SOC 110C-5807, Introduction to Sociology, 5 Credits

Spring 2008: March 31st – June 10th

Daily 9:30 – 10:20 am, N-208

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 – 2:30 & Fridays, 12:30 – 1:30, D110-I

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will acquaint you with basic sociological concepts and perspectives as you become aware of and explore the importance of social topics such as class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, and the way in which these subjects intersect with one another. You will also learn about the field of Sociology and become familiar with various “subfields” of the area. Through lecture, film and other media, as well as assigned readings, this course will take you on an exploration of the many dimensions of contemporary sociology. We will make broad use of popular culture to understand the many complexities of our world. By the end of this course, I hope to have all of you thinking critically about the way things work, why things work the way they do, and who we are within the social fabric of the global entity in which we live. You will be asked, over the course of the term, to confront the things you take for granted. Everyday occurrences will be challenged and thought through critically. Imagine yourself as Neo from “The Matrix” when he decides to take the Red Pill or Alice when she decides to explore the rabbit hole. Both must deal with what’s at the end of their adventures. What will you find at the end of *this* adventure?



“The reality is it’s up to you guys to figure out how the media works and break through.”

– Claudia Dreifus

A NOTE ABOUT COURSE CONTENT: Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we sometimes talk about provocative material. Please be advised that, when we explore controversial topics, they will always be framed within 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. Please know, however, that you will be responsible for any course material you miss if you choose not to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about content or classroom climate, feel free to speak with me about it right away.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have medical information to share with me in the event of an emergency, please contact me via email or come to see me during office hours. Emergency preparedness is important! If you need course modifications, adaptations, or accommodations because of a disability, I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). If you prefer, you may contact them directly by going to B132 or by calling 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110. Information is also available on their website at <http://bellevuecollege.edu/drc/>

EXPLORE THE LMC! BCC’s Library and Media Center is at your fingertips! I *strongly* encourage you to visit the Library at least once a week, but you can also access it via the web. Talk to a Reference Librarian at the Library (D-126), by calling (425)564-6161, or by email bccref@bcc.ctc.edu.

Main Library Media Center:	http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/
For the LMC online catalog:	http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/catalogs.html
For article databases:	http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/periodicals.html

READING REQUIREMENTS:

- *The Spirit of Sociology: A Reader, 2nd Ed.* by Ron Matson
- *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler
- Handouts and articles

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Any current Dictionary of the English Language
- Any current Sociology Dictionary
- *A Writer’s Reference, 6th Ed.* By Diana Hacker. See the companion website here: <http://www.dianahacker.com/>

LEARNING AND COURSE OUTCOMES: Upon your dedicated participation and subsequent completion of this course, you will demonstrate:

- 1) A general understanding of basic concepts most widely used in sociology today. You will review some of the “classics” in sociology as well as exploring the recent move toward cultural studies.
- 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 United States. In addition, we will explore the way in which these representations are culturally subverted and contrasted in popular culture texts.

GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS:

- Attend all class meetings.
- Complete readings and homework assignments **on time**.
- More than **four** 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 in an emergency. Excused absences included doctor’s visits, family emergencies, and sometimes work-related issues.
- **All** electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom at **all** times. This includes cell phones, blackberries, laptops, etc. If you need a laptop to take notes, I will need verification.
- Emailed assignments are not accepted, unless you arrange it with me prior to the assignment deadline.
- Late work is accepted, but 10% of the grade is taken off for each day your work is late **under all circumstances**. Make-up quizzes are not allowed, unless your absence is excused. Exceptions sometimes happen, but you need to discuss that with me privately.
- I expect that your behavior in class be respectful. Side-talking and whispering is disruptive to the class as a whole as well as to individual students. This is not acceptable in my classroom, so I insist that you refrain from it. Continued disrespectful behavior in class may result in your being asked to leave and will result in your participation credit lowering.
- You are responsible for your own learning in the classroom. If you miss class, please connect with your colleagues to find out what you missed.
- There are **no extra credit assignments** for this class. Please turn in your work on time and ask questions when you have them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Coursework consists of weekly homework assignments, exams (no Final Exam), and one major assignment based on the novel we're reading for the course. You will be in groups for most of the work for this larger assignment and it will culminate into a presentation at the end of the course. There are job assignments for students uncomfortable with public speaking.

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

<u>Participation:</u>	150
<u>Homework:</u>	400
<u>Quizzes:</u>	200
<u>Research & Presentation:</u>	250
<u>Total:</u>	1000

The Fine Print (or, what I really mean by that table above):

Participation:

- Come to class and be **on time**
- Provoke energetic discussion, speak out, and listen actively
- Work diligently and respectfully in your groups
- **Always** bring your readings to class with notes for discussion
- Look up words you don't understand or know
- Ask lots of questions
- Think critically about the world around you

Exams, randomly delivered and randomly scored: Exams cover everything up through the week of the test and will usually include multiple choice and short-answer questions (either or both). Your responses should be clear and concise. Your short-answer responses must range from no less than one full (four-sentence) paragraph, to three full paragraphs. Questions are based on readings, in-class discussion, and lecture material. Information about point distribution will be on each exam.

Research Project and Group Presentation: Your project will include research, short papers (1 – 2 pages), and a final Group Presentation. You will be asked to take a subtheme of sociology (religion, education, family, etc.) and apply it to *Parable of the Sower*. I will provide a folder for this project so that when you turn it in, all notes and reports remain in one place. I will ask for the folders at random points throughout the quarter, so be sure to keep it up to date and always bring it to class.

For all of your written work:

Please submit proofread work **only**. Sloppy writing will be returned for a rewrite once and docked 10%. Rewritten work is expected by the following class meeting. Your font should be Times, 12 pts, double-spaced with a 1" margin all around. Your work **must** be cited using either MLA style, and you must always, *always* give proper credit to the texts from which you draw and formulate your ideas. Even when you don't quote directly, give

credit where credit is due. Title pages are not counted as page numbers due. Similarly with bibliographies, these are not counted as page numbers due. If you decide to place your personal and class information on the first page of your paper instead (which is fine), please do not take up more than for single-spaced lines at the top right or left corner of the page.

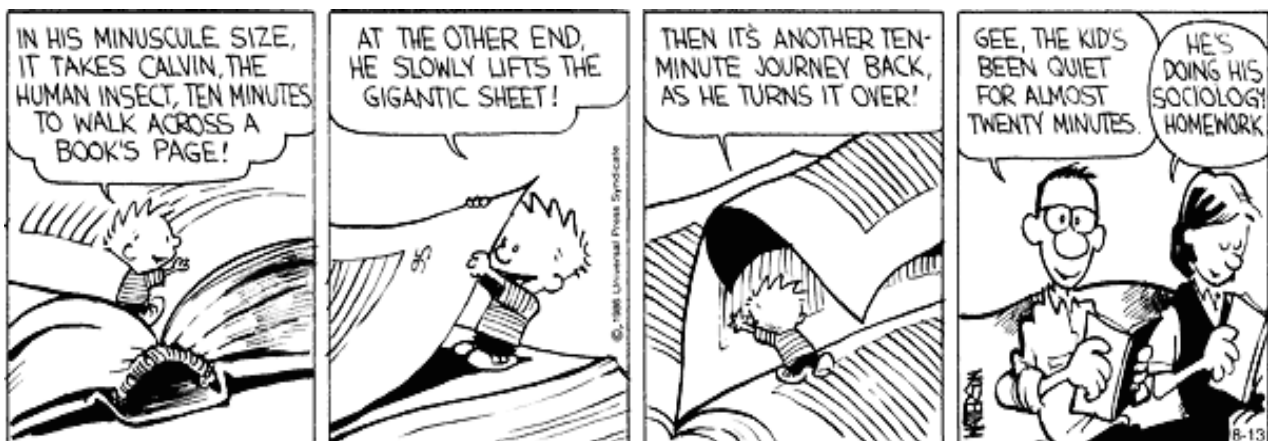
Written work is evaluated on:

1) Content

- a. Fulfilling the assignment.
- b. Developing your argument and making use of examples and evidence to support your argument.
- c. Flow of thought throughout the paper, with strong analyses and conclusions.

2) Writing Style

- a. Excellent command of the written English language. In other words, most excellent grammar. **NOTE: If you struggle with grammar and spelling or are an ESL student, please let me know! I'm happy to work with you and point you in the right direction.**
- b. Clarity of thought.
- c. Good organization and attention to detail.
- d. Persuasiveness of your argument/s.
- e. Creativity. Make it an interesting read!
- f. PROOFREAD your work. Please do a spell/grammar check before you hand it in.
- g. Dude, like totally don't write **colloquially**. A conversation is a conversation. A paper is an entirely different set of discussions. ☺



Grading:

90-100 = A. The A paper is coveted. It's a paper that 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 demonstrates your command not only of the English language, but of the form and flow of a solid piece of written work. I also like to see/read/hear your "writing voice." That is, I want your style to come through! Your arguments should be solid and backed up with intellectual ammunition. You should demonstrate a strong understanding of our readings and the in-class media and how they intersect with one another.

80-89 = B. 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 and/or media and/or lecture material as you could be. I should see that you're being challenged and that you're struggling with the course issues and themes, and what they represent to you in an interconnected way. Your understandings of some of the course materials are stronger than others.

70-79 = C. 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.

60-69 = D. Ah, the D. D is for "Don't be Discouraged." I will work closely with each of you as much as time allows, getting you up to speed in class. Your struggles should not be with writing so much at this point but if they are please see me immediately. A D paper is not proofread, nor does it 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 and there you're not responding to the questions raised in class. Demonstrated understanding of the course materials is not presented clearly, or at all. (NOTE: A D and below may be resubmitted once during the quarter. I enter the better grade.)

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY: We will set the rhythm of the class in the first couple of weeks. I envision a learning community, one in which I am a participant as well. I am a firm believer in being a lifelong learner and to that end I often carry away a lot more information from students than I ever expect. I am most interested, for the purposes of this class, to see how well we can all wrap our minds around the idea of thinking critically about the various issues and themes presented about the social world in which we live. You should expect to be exposed to new and various ways of thinking and knowing. As a learning community, we will be helping one another think through all of the ideas that connect back to course themes.

When you don't see your own images through the media or in books, you start thinking you're weird, and your self-esteem gets bruised.

- Francisco Alarcón, poet and director of Spanish for Native Speakers, UC Davis



COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

<u>WEEK:</u> DATES AND THEMES	<u>READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:</u> READINGS ALWAYS DUE MONDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
ONE March 31 st – April 2 nd No class April 3rd and 4th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Introduction to the course The Social Self The Sociological Imagination Social Roles	<u>Readings (please have your reading done by Friday this week only):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matson, TOPIC 1: Introduction to the Discipline <u>Assignments:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the syllabus and write a 1-2 page commentary on what you think the three most important points are, and why. Write a 1-2 page commentary on The Sociological Imagination. Include an example of how you might use it. <u>Quote of the Week:</u> “Perhaps the world’s second worst crime is boredom. The first is being a bore.” - Jean Baudrillard
TWO April 7 th – 11 th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> What do Sociologists Do? What is a sociological question? Research Methods What’s in a statistic? Which comes first: Culture or Society? Is Culture a What or a Who? What about those “other” cultures?	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matson, TOPICS 2 & 3: Sociology as a Science / Culture <u>Assignments:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to any mall for 2 hours and observe. Provide an account of what you notice people doing in pairs, groups, and individually. Be respectful and discreet. <u>Quote of the Week:</u> “Without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible.” - Frank Zappa
THREE April 14 th – 18 th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> I learn, therefore I know...? How do you know what you	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matson, TOPICS 4 & 5: Socialization / Social Structure and Social Interaction <i>Parable of the Sower</i>, 2024 – 2026 (1 – 87)

<p><u>WEEK:</u> DATES AND THEMES</p>	<p><u>READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:</u> READINGS ALWAYS DUE MONDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS</p>
<p>know...how do you know who you are? Where exactly are you in this social landscape of ours?</p>	<p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch “Did You Know?” on YouTube: http://youtube.com/watch?v=pMcfrLYDm2U and come up with a discussion question for class on Friday. <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “Books are funny little portable pieces of thought.” - Susan Sontag</p>
<p>FOUR April 21st – 25th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> What’s in a group? Peer pressure and organizational influence. What is deviance, why do we have it, who does it benefit, and how is it created and maintained?</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matson, TOPICS 6 & 7: Social Groups / Deviance and Social Control • <i>Parable of the Sower</i>, 2026 – 2027 (89 – 133) <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: Bibliography and Annotations • While remaining perfectly polite and legal, publicly do something outside the social norm and turn in a 2-3 page commentary on what you did, when and where you did it, and what the public response was. <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “All you touch and all you see is all your life will ever be.” -- Roger Waters</p>
<p>FIVE April 28th – May 2nd <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Inequality and Identity If someone benefits, does someone else lose out? What does it mean to critically understand race? Intersectionality: Race, Class, and Gender</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matson, TOPICS 8, 9, and 10: Social Inequalities / Race and Ethnicity / Gender <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website Evaluation (see handout) • Write up from each group member on progress <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “College isn't the place to go for ideas.” - Helen Keller</p>
<p>SIX May 5th – 9th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> What’s in a family? What is home? Diasporic identity</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matson, TOPIC 11: Family • <i>Parable of the Sower</i>, 2027 – end (135 – 295) <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage Contract (see handout) <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.” - Alex Haley</p>

<p><u>WEEK:</u> DATES AND THEMES</p>	<p><u>READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:</u> READINGS ALWAYS DUE MONDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS</p>
<p>SEVEN May 12th – 16th <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Deep Discussions, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> Group work, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> Midterm Exam</p>	<p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Exam Friday • Using Ebsco Host via the LMC database (use Academic Search Premier), locate and read: “Intuition of the Future: Utopia and Catastrophe in Octavia Butler’s <i>Parable of the Sower</i>” by Jerry Philips. Write a review and an analysis (see handout) • Write up from each group member on progress <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “You think you’re so clever and classless and free.” -- John Lennon</p>
<p>EIGHT May 19th – 23rd <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Understanding Sociology and some of its subfields Why are Education and Religion in the same chapter? “The End of Education” “Religion is the opiate of the masses”</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matson, TOPIC 12: Education & Religion <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments this week! ☺ <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “The only thing more pathetic than Indians on TV is Indians watching Indians on TV.” Evan Adams (Coast Salish) as Thomas Builds-The-Fire in “Smoke Signals”</p>
<p>NINE May 27th – 30th (No class May 26th) <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Does your vote count? “Rock The Vote” and other methods of relief for apathy Population density and “1% Population” enthusiasts: too many babies, or are we just living longer?</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matson, TOPICS 13 & 14: Politics & The Economy / Population and Ecology <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What’s in the news? See handout <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “I think the future of humanity will be like the past, we’ll do what we’ve always done and there will still be human beings. Granted, there will always be people doing something different and there are a lot of possibilities.” - Octavia Butler</p>
<p>TEN June 2nd – 5th (no class June 6th) <u>Thematic Overview:</u> Global Warming or Bad Science? How ideas about our environment affect our future.</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matson, TOPIC 15: Technology and Globalization <p><u>Assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentations! <p><u>Quote of the Week:</u> “A people without the</p>

WEEK: DATES AND THEMES	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS: READINGS ALWAYS DUE MONDAY ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES VARY BUT ARE ALWAYS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
What can you do?	knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." - Marcus Garvey
ELEVEN: June 9 th – 10 th Thematic Overview: Closure	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentations! Quote of the Week: "A friend is someone who gives you total freedom to be yourself." - Jim Morrison

EMAILING ME: When you email me, ALWAYS put in the SUBJECT LINE the following, in this order: SOC 110 – YOUR NAME – SUBJECT

For example: **SOC110 – Jane Doe – Question about Exam #5.**

Your emails will be answered much faster this way. For ease of communication, it is ESSENTIAL that you stick to this mode of emailing me.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR: I am of Tsalagi (Cherokee), Irish, Romany/Gypsy, and Russian Jewish descent. I received my Ph.D. in Sociology (with a parenthetical notation in American Studies) from UC Santa Cruz. I received my first MA in Sociology from Humboldt State University and my second MA in Sociology from UCSC, my BA in Sociology and Journalism from Mills College, and my AA in English and Creative Writing from Vista Community College. This is my second year as Instructor of Sociology here at BCC. I am Editor-In-Chief for *Native Realities*, the journal for Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers and the Native American/Indigenous Studies Area Chair for the Popular Culture and American Culture Association's SW/Texas Regional Conferences. I love to write and am currently working on a memoir. I'm an avid Scrabble player, tattoo enthusiast, and I definitely drink too much coffee. I probably work too much as well, but who's counting? I live in Central Seattle with my thirteen-year-old son.

Thank you for a wonderful term! ☺