

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

SOC 110 (I)

Spring 2008

Bellevue Community College

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Office Hours: Daily 8:30am-9:20am
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Class Meets: M/W 3:00pm-5:10pm
Class Location: C164

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.

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: “Mapping the Social Landscape” by Susan J. Ferguson (5th 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.
- *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. Please try to make it your personal goal to visit my office hours at least once this quarter. I think you will find it helpful. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can schedule an appointment that fits your schedule.
- *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. 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.*
- *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 BCC 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. 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 unless you have had it approved by me BEFORE the due date.** Late work will receive a **zero** grade.

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

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. Major due dates are indicated on the attached Course Calendar, so plan ahead.

- **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.** If you cheat, 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. If you have any hesitation, or if you are in doubt about one of these issues, feel free to ask me.

GRADING

Grades are based on six factors: (1) performance on exams, (2) performance in seminar, (3) performance on a group presentation, (4) class participation, and (5) performance on homework assignments. Each of these elements is awarded a specific number of points:

Exams (3 @ 200pts each)	600 points (60% of final grade)
Seminar	150 points (15% of final grade)
Group presentation	100 points (10% of final grade)
Participation	100 points (10% of final grade)
<u>Homework Assignments</u>	<u>50 points (5% of final grade)</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) **Performance on Exams:** Three exams are given over the course of the quarter. Exams may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and 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, you will receive a zero grade. Please review the attached Course Calendar and make note of the exam dates. Plan ahead!

- (2) Performance in Seminar: We will have eleven seminars over the course of the quarter; you are permitted to miss one seminar without consequence to your grade. Seminar involves breaking students into groups in order to have thought-provoking discussions about a reading or two. It is crucial that you come to seminar prepared. You will need to complete the readings ahead of time and bring a brief paper (approximately 1 typed page) to each seminar. (NOTE: I will not accept papers that are not typed.)

Each seminar paper should include the following:

- a statement of the article's thesis (in your own words!); in other words, what is the main point of the article, and what is the author CONCLUDING about the topic?
- a one paragraph summary of the seminar article
- 3-4 central questions that you have about the article (the questions should be thought-provoking, not "What did you think about the article?" and "What is the author saying?").

Seminar papers should NOT include your opinion about the article (you will have plenty of time to talk about that during seminar!). Instead, remain focused in your papers, and succinctly explain what the author is actually saying. Your seminar grade is based on attendance, participation, and papers.

Seminar papers: 10 @ 5pts each = 50 points

(graded throughout the quarter)

Seminar participation: 100 points

(grade assigned at end of quarter)

TOTAL SEMINAR POINTS: 150

- (3) Performance on a Group Presentation: Students will divide into pairs and give a 20 minute presentation to the rest of the class about a reading of their choice. These presentations should: (a) highlight the major points and topics from the reading, (b) make sociological connections to the lecture material, films, and/or other readings (you should have a segment of your presentation called something like, "How this article relates to other class material"), (c) hold the interest of your viewers, and (d) be interactive. You will be graded on all four of these components. (Note: these presentations are not intended for you to share your personal opinions about the readings – they are meant for you to help your classmates understand what the readings are about and how they relate to the course themes.) In short, you are supposed to **teach** your classmates about what the author is saying. Each group needs to make their presentation as understandable and interesting as possible– you might design a short activity that involves your classmates, or you might use visual aids to "energize" your presentation, or both. I would be happy to consult with each pair ahead of time to make sure you're on the right track (in fact, I recommend this highly). Each group will sign up in advance for a particular day and reading.
- (4) 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 and add 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!*
- (5) Performance on Homework Assignments: You will complete several homework assignments throughout the quarter that require you to reflect on the course material and/or observe the social world. You should do your best to address every assignment thoughtfully, clearly, and completely. Homework will be graded not only on completeness (Did you adequately address all the components of the assignment?), but also thoughtfulness (Does your assignment show that you thought hard about the topic, or did you give the topic just a little superficial attention?). Homework assignments vary in length - some may be a paragraph long, others will be 1-2 pages (usually typed and double-spaced). Please note that I will not accept late homework, so homework that is not handed in on time will receive a **zero** grade. Additionally, I will not accept homework that isn't typed (unless I've specifically mentioned that it can be handwritten). Some homework assignments are described in the attached Course Calendar, and others will be announced during class.

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 Resource Center (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.

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. “MAP”, when listed, refers to *Mapping the Social Landscape*.

WEEK ONE - Introduction to the Course

“We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice.”

-John Berger

Topics: What is sociology?
How do sociologists study the social world?
Inconvenient facts; debunking myths and common perceptions

Readings and Assignments:

- Read syllabus and make sure you understand it
- McIntyre, L. “Who’s Afraid of Sociology” (on WEBSITE)
- Schwalbe, M. “Finding out how the Social World Works” MAP pp32-42
- Miner, H. “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema” (on WEBSITE)
- Read question #7 on page 8 (at the end of the “Body Ritual” article). Does Miner’s piece make any more sense to you now that you know this? Skim back over the Miner article, looking at it in a different light now that you know the “secret.” (You don’t need to write or type any response to this question – just make sure you read it.)

WEEK TWO - Introduction to the Field

“We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

-Anais Nin

Topics: Social Construction of Reality
Language; self-fulfilling prophecies; incorrigible propositions; faith
Racial formations and the social construction of race
Role of the media in creating and shaping reality

Readings and Assignments:

- Glassner, B. “Why Americans Fear the Wrong Things” MAP pp62-68
- Omi, M. and H. Winant “Racial Formations in the United States” (on WEBSITE)
- Reinerman, C. and H. Levine “The Crack Attack: Politics and Media in the Crack Scare” (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE MONDAY: Homework Assignment**
You have a two-part homework assignment. First, answer the following question (in a sentence or two): What points do you think Miner was trying to make by writing this article? In other words, why did he write it? Next, write a description of “Sports of the Nacirema” following a

similar model to Horace Miner's "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." (Hint: limit yourself to one sport.) You'll need to imitate Miner in describing the sport as if you were a complete outsider to the culture. You also need to use your descriptions to illustrate some underlying theme or deeper meaning of Nacirema life (what does this sport tell us about what's important to the Nacirema people?). Write about two pages, typed and double-spaced.

- **DUE WEDNESDAY: SEMINAR on GLASSNER article**



"The Boondocks"

WEEK THREE – The Sociological Imagination

*"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*

Topics: Sociological imagination
Sociological perspective applied to social problems like suicide, mass murder, and eating disorders
Power of the situation

Readings and Assignments: **NOTE: No class on Wednesday, April 16th**

- Mills, C.W. "The Promise" MAP pp1-7
- Gaines, D. "Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead-End Kids" (on WEBSITE)
- Sternheimer, K. "It's Not the Media: The Truth about Pop Culture's Influence on Children" MAP pp459-472
- Hesse-Biber, S. "Becoming a Certain Body" (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE MONDAY: SEMINAR on Gaines article**

WEEK FOUR – Social Structure and Stratification

Topics: Power of the situation
 Social structure
 Architecture of society: status, roles, groups, organizations, and institutions
 Social stratification

Readings and Assignments:

- Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo “Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison” MAP pp43-52
- Kelman, H. and V.L. Hamilton “The My Lai Massacre: A Military Crime of Obedience” (on WEBSITE)
- Adler, P. and P. Adler “Peer Power: Clique Dynamics among School Children” MAP pp155-169
- Williams, C. “Shopping as Symbolic Interaction: Race, Class, and Gender in the Toy Store” MAP pp181-193
- **DUE MONDAY: Homework Assignment**
 Based on the readings, lecture, and discussion from the previous weeks, what does the quote from Stephen Jay Gould (on page 6 of this syllabus) mean? What is he saying *sociologically*? Write your response in a paragraph or less.
- **DUE WEDNESDAY: SEMINAR on Adler/Adler article**



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

*“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*

Topics: Culture (defined) and subculture
 Culture and race/ethnicity
 Adapting to a new culture: assimilation, accommodation, amalgamation
 Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativity

Readings and Assignments:

- **MONDAY: Exam #1**
- Velliquette, A.M. and J.B. Murray “The New Tattoo Subculture” MAP pp70-81
- Boswell, A. and Z. Spade “Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture” MAP pp242-255
- Gitlin, T. “Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives” MAP pp441-450
- Trask, H. “Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture” MAP pp93-101
- Fadiman, A. “The Melting Pot” (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE WEDNESDAY: SEMINAR on FADIMAN article**

WEEK SIX – The Sociological Perspective: Culture and Socialization



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

Topics: Socialization
Gender and socialization
Re-socialization and total institutions

Readings and Assignments:

- Becker, H. “Becoming a Marijuana User” (on WEBSITE)
- Lorber, J. “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender” MAP pp102-114
- Granfield, R. “Making It By Faking It: Working-Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment” MAP pp114-127
- Lewis, J. “Learning to Strip: The Socialization Experiences of Exotic Dancers” MAPpp127-143
- **DUE MONDAY: SEMINAR on LORBER article and GRANFIELD article (bring two seminar papers!)**

WEEK SEVEN – Socialization and Stratification: Social Class



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

-William Nicholson

Topics: Social class
Income and wealth
Poverty
Social class and education

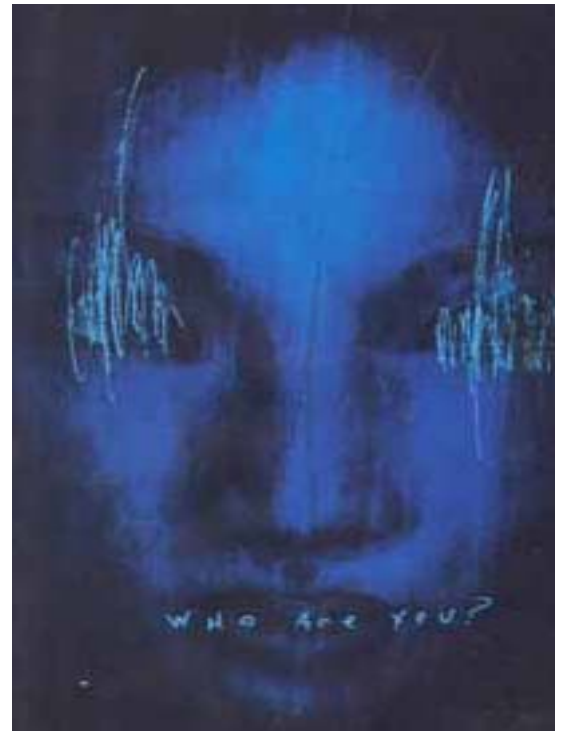
Readings and Assignments:

- Dyer, G. “Anybody’s Son Will Do” MAP pp144-154
- Crow Dog, M. and R. Erdoes “Civilize Them with a Stick” MAP pp571-578
- Domhoff, G.W. “Who Rules America? The Corporate Community and the Upper Class” MAP pp266-279
- Mantsios, G. “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible” MAP pp450-458
- **DUE MONDAY: SEMINAR on CROW DOG article**

WEEK EIGHT – Stratification: Social Class and Race

Readings and Assignments:

- Wilson, W. “When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor” (on WEBSITE)
- Ehrenreich, B. “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America” MAP pp292-305
- **DUE MONDAY: SEMINAR on EHRENREICH article**
- **WEDNESDAY: Exam #2**



WEEK NINE – Stratification: Race



Topic:

Racism and its forms (individual and institutional)

Readings and Assignments: **No classes on Monday, May 26th**

- Tatum, Beverly Daniel “Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?” *excerpt* (on WEBSITE)
- Chesler, M. M. Peet, and T. Sevig, “Blinded by Whiteness: The Development of White College Students’ Racial Awareness” (on WEBSITE)
- Waters, M. “Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?” (on WEBSITE)
- Blank, R. “An Overview of Trends in Social and Economic Well-Being, By Race” (on WEBSITE)
- Bonilla-Silva, E. “New Racism’, Color-Blind Racism, and the Future of Whiteness in America” MAP pp359-373
- **DUE WEDNESDAY: SEMINAR on CHESLER article**

WEEK TEN – Stratification: Race and Gender

Topics:

Institutional Racism
 Gender and the individual
 Gender as structure
 Gender and communication

Readings and Assignments:

- Shapiro, T.M. “The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality” MAP pp280-291
- Kozol, J. “Still Separate, Still Unequal: America’s Educational Apartheid” MAP pp578-595
- Ferguson, A.A. “Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity” MAP p595-603
- Risman, B. “Gender as Structure” MAP pp306-315
- Lucal, B. “What it Means to Be Gendered Like Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System” MAP pp315-329
- Gerschick, T.J. “Sisyphus in a Wheelchair: Physical Disabilities and Masculinity” (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE WEDNESDAY: SEMINAR on GERSCHICK article**



WEEK ELEVEN – Stratification: Gender

Topics: Gender stratification

Readings and Assignments:

- Tannen, D. “You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation” (on WEBSITE)
- Williams, C.L. “The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the ‘Female’ Professions” (on WEBSITE)
- Crittenden, A. “The Mommy Tax” MAP pp619-630
- Loe, M. “Working at Bazooms: The Intersection of Power, Gender, and Sexuality” MAP pp342-359
- **DUE MONDAY: SEMINAR on WILLIAMS article**

LAST EXAMINATION

This course’s third exam will be held on **Friday, June 13th, from 1:30-2:30pm**. Plan ahead accordingly. I do not give early or late exams.