

## **SYLLABUS FOR SOC101: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY**

Course: SOC\*K101 Principles of Sociology

Course Schedule: TR 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Location: D210

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

Office: C142

Phone: 860-215-9457

Email: SNeufeld@trcc.comnet.edu

Office Hours: Mon and Wed 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and by appointment (please always confirm with me first!)

### **I. Course Description**

Sociology is the study of groups, organizations, institutions, and societies, and their influence on human behavior. Sociology goes beyond individual and psychological explanations of human behavior to look at social factors and trends that shape individual behavior and the behavior of groups and societies. These social trends and factors include cultural aspects of societies, such as beliefs, values, and social norms. They also include structural aspects of societies, which refers to the positions and roles people occupy in groups, institutions, and societies as a whole. In particular, sociology focuses on patterns of social inequality, especially class, racial and ethnic, and gender inequalities in society—how they are created and maintained and how they affect our opportunities, beliefs and attitudes, and behavior in society. Overall, sociology allows us to analyze societies and social behavior from a critical perspective, thereby providing us with a better understanding of social problems and issues.

The course is divided into three parts, with an exam after each part. The first part of the course will examine how sociologists study the social world. This will discuss the idea of sociology as a science, the research methods used by sociologists to study the social world, and theoretical perspectives on society and social behavior. The second part of the course will explore the sociological concepts of culture and social structure. In terms of culture, we will look at issues such as culture and socialization, deviance, crime, and social control. In terms of social structure, we will examine concepts such as statuses and roles, groups and organizations, total institutions, and community. The final part of the course will study social inequality, including class inequality, racial and ethnic inequality, and gender inequality. Along the way, students will be introduced to a number of prominent classical theorists in the history of sociology, such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, Goffman, Merton, and Becker, as well as a variety of prominent theorists and researchers today.

### **II. Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes refer to knowledge, skills, and abilities you are expected to develop and demonstrate in this course. In this course, you will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of research methods used in sociology
- Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives in sociology

- Demonstrate knowledge of major figures, concepts, and theories in the field of sociology
- Demonstrate an understanding of how social factors as a whole influence individual and group values, attitudes, and beliefs
- Develop an awareness of cultural differences within American society and around the globe
- Understand trends in social inequality in American society
- Understand causes and consequences of social inequality in American society
- Understand causes and consequences of racial/ethnic inequalities in American society
- Understand causes and consequences of gender inequalities in American society
- Learn about real world settings and situations that reflect and illustrate sociological concepts and perspectives

### III. Course Readings

The required book for the class is:

- Susan J. Ferguson, *Mapping the Social Landscape: Reading in Sociology, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. McGraw Hill, 2013.

This book is an edited volume of readings, rather than a traditional textbook. While there is no required traditional text book, you may find it useful to consult a textbook as an additional source of information. One textbook that I have used in the past and found useful is Lisa J. McIntyre, *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, McGraw Hill, 2008. Copies of it are available on reserve in the TRCC library. You may also purchase a copy of this or any other textbook on-line if you wish.

Some of the required weekly readings are available on-line as listed in the Course Schedule in Section VI. If you are unable to access the website by clicking on the link in the syllabus, you should copy and paste the website address into your browser. Assigned weekly readings should be done by the beginning of the week.

### IV. Course Assignments and Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on two assignments, a final project consisting of either a traditional research paper or a service learning project, and three take-home exams:

- The two assignments will each count for 10% of the final grade.
- The final project will count for 20% of the final grade.
- The first exam will count for 15% of the final grade, the second exam will count for 20% of the final grade, and the third exam will count for 25% of the final grade. The third exam will be your final exam, although it will not be a cumulative exam.
- **Class participation will help boost your final GPA for the course.**

All assignments and exams involve written work, and the quality of your writing, including spelling and grammar and proper paragraph construction, will be a factor in your

overall grade. At a minimum, you should spell check all work before it is submitted. **If your writing skills are not strong, I strongly encourage you to visit The Writing Center in room C117 for assistance to avoid deductions in your grade.** I am also willing to review early drafts of papers and assignments provided you send them to me several days in advance of the due date.

Late work will be penalized up to a full letter grade deduction depending on the severity of the infraction. Exams cannot be submitted after I have returned the graded exams, which is usually one week after the exams are due, without explicit permission from me. **Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects some level of effort.**

If you have a disability that may affect your progress in this course, please meet with Matt Liscum in Room A-119 in the Counseling and Advising Office as soon as possible. He can be reached at (860) 383-5240 or [MLiscum@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:MLiscum@trcc.commnet.edu). Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

## **V. Cell Phone Policy**

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

## **VI. Course Schedule**

The following schedule is a tentative list of the lecture topics that are intended to be covered each week as well as the required readings for the week. Since the schedule is tentative, the dates for specific topics and readings may be revised during the course. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class.

### **Part I: Sociology As Social Science**

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Thurs 1/19: Welcome to Principles of Sociology!

Week 2: The Sociological Perspective

Tues 1/24: The Sociological Perspective

Thurs 1/26: Sociology as Social Science

Readings: Ferguson readings 1, 2, and 3

Week 3: Sociological Theory

Tues 1/31: Deductive and Inductive Theory

Thurs 2/2: Durkheim's Theory of Suicide

Readings:

- Ferguson reading 7
- “Inductive or Deductive? Two Different Approaches”, on-line at <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/sociological-inquiry-principles-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods/s05-03-inductive-or-deductive-two-dif.html>
- Quality Research International, “Case Study: Durkheim's study of suicide: inductive or deductive?” on-line at <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/methodology/RRW2pt2Casestudydurkheim.php>
- “Emile Durkheim on Suicide” at <http://www2.uvawise.edu/pww8y/Soc/-Theorists/Durkheim/Suicide.html>

Week 4: Research Methods

Tues 2/7: Sampling and Quantitative Research

Thurs 2/9: Experimental Research and Qualitative Research

Readings:

- Ferguson reading 8
- Grimes, “If You Want to Observe ‘Em, Join ‘Em,” The New York Times, June 16, 2008, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/books/16grimes.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/books/16grimes.html?_r=0)

Assignment 1 handed out: due 2/16

Week 5: Theoretical Perspectives

Tues 2/14: The Functionalist and Conflict Perspectives

Thurs 2/16: The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 4, 5, 19, 38, and 40

Exam 1 handed out; due 2/23

## **Part II: Culture and Social Structure**

Week 6: Culture

Tues 2/21: Culture

Thurs 2/23: Subcultures and Countercultures

Readings: Ferguson readings 10 and 11

Week 7: Social Norms and Socialization

Tues 2/28: Social Norms

Thurs 3/2: Socialization

Readings: Ferguson readings 12, 13, 14, and 16

Assignment 2 handed out; due 3/9

Week 8: Deviant Behavior and Social Control  
Tues 3/7: Deviant Behavior  
Thurs 3/9: Social Control

Readings: Ferguson readings 6, 20, 21, and 22

Week 9: Spring Break—No Classes

Week 10: Social Structure  
Tues 3/21: Statuses, Roles, Relationships, and Social Networks  
Thurs 3/23: Groups and Organizations

Readings: Ferguson readings 17 and 18

Final project instructions posted; due 5/4

Week 11: Community and Its Decline  
Tues 3/28: Community  
Thurs 3/30: The Decline of Community

Readings:

- Ferguson reading 56
- Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital”, *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78, at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>
- Joseph Stromberg, “Eric Klinenberg on Going Solo”, Smithsonian.com, at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Eric-Klinenberg-on-Going-Solo.html?c=y&page=1>

Exam 2 handed out; due 4/6

### **Part III: Social Inequality**

Week 12: Social Inequality  
Tues 4/4: Social Inequality  
Thurs 4/6: Functionalist and Conflict Perspectives

Readings: Ferguson readings 23, 41, and 43

Week 13: Stratification and Social Class  
Tues 4/11: Social Stratification  
Thurs 4/13: Social Class

Readings: Ferguson readings 24, 26, and 55

Week 14: Education  
Tues 4/18: The Functionalist Perspective

Thurs 4/20: The Conflict Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 50, 51, and 52

Week 15: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Tues 4/25: Race and Ethnicity

Thurs 4/27: Racism and Racial Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 25, 31, 32, 33, and 34

Week 15: Gender Inequality

Tues 5/2: Sex vs. Gender

Thurs 5/4: Gender Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 9, 27, 28, 29, and 42

Final Project due Thursday 5/4

Week 16: Conclusion

Tues 5/9: Concluding Remarks: The Sociological Perspective and You

Final Exam handed out; due **Thursday** 5/16 by 9:00 a.m.