

SYLLABUS FOR SOC101: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

Course: SOC*K101 Principles of Sociology

Course Schedule: MWF 11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

Location: D105

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: M and W 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., and by appointment (always check 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, and how aspects of culture and social structure influence human behavior. In terms of culture, we will look at concepts and issues such as culture, subcultures and countercultures, socialization, deviance, crime, and social control. In terms of social structure, we will examine concepts such as statuses and roles, groups and organizations, social institutions, and community. The final part of the course will study social inequality in our society. We will consider different perspectives on inequality and the role of our educational system in creating and maintaining social inequality in our society. In addition, we will discuss concepts such as social class, race/ethnicity, and gender, and how they affect social inequality in our society. Throughout the course, 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, 7th 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, 4th 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 of any kind that may affect your progress in this course, please contact Matt Liscum, the TRCC Disability Service Provider (DSP) at 860-383-5240. His office is Room A-119 in the Counseling and Advising Office. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

Students are expected to follow to standards of academic honesty. If there is a question about cheating or plagiarism, the college's **Academic Integrity Policy** (revised 8 January 2003) will be followed.

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

Fri 1/22: Introduction

Readings: None

Week 2: Sociological Theory

Mon 1/25: The Sociological Imagination
Wed 1/27: Sociology as Social Science
Fri 1/29: Deductive and Inductive Theory

Readings: Ferguson readings 1, 2, and 3

- Ferguson reading 7
- “Operationalization”, Wikipedia entry at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operationalization>
- “Emile Durkheim”, Wikipedia entry, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Durkheim
- “Emile Durkheim on Suicide” at <http://www2.uvawise.edu/pww8y/Soc/-Theorists/Durkheim/Suicide.html>

Week 3: Research Methods

Mon, 2/1: Durkheim’s Theory of Suicide
Wed, 2/3: Quantitative Research Methods
Fri, 2/5: Qualitative Research Methods

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

Week 4: Theoretical Perspectives

Mon, 2/8: Experimental Research
Wed, 2/10: The Functionalist Perspective
Fri, 2/12: The Conflict Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 4 and 5

Assignment #1 Handed Out 2/12; Due 2/19

Week 5: Theoretical Perspectives

Mon, 2/15: President’s Day Holiday—No Class
Wed, 2/17: The Conflict Perspective (cont’d)
Fri, 2/19: The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 19, 38, and 40

Exam #1 Handed Out 2/19; Due 2/26

Part II: Culture and Social Structure

Week 6: Culture

Mon, 2/22: Culture
Wed, 2/24: Subcultures and Countercultures
Fri, 2/26: Social Norms

Readings: Ferguson readings 10, 11, and 12

Assignment #2 Handed Out 2/26; Due 3/7

Week 7: Socialization

Mon, 2/29: Theories of Socialization

Wed, 3/2: Socialization and the Media

Fri, 3/4: Total Institutions and Resocialization

Readings: Ferguson readings 13, 14, and 16

Week 8: Deviant Behavior and Social Control

Mon, 3/7: Theories of Deviance Part I

Wed, 3/9: Theories of Deviance Part II

Fri, 3/11: Social Control

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

Week 9: Social Structure

Mon, 3/14: Roles and Statuses

Wed, 3/16: Groups

Fri, 3/18: Organizations

Readings: Ferguson readings 17 and 18

Final Project Handed Out 3/18; Due 5/2

Week 10: Spring Break

Week 11: Community

Mon, 3/28: Community

Wed, 3/30: The Decline of Community

Fri, 4/1: Social Change

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 4/1; Due 4/8

Part III: Social Inequality

Week 12: Social Inequality

Mon, 4/4: Film

Wed, 4/6: Post-Industrialism

Fri, 4/8: Social Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 23, 41, and 43

Week 13: Social Stratification

Mon, 4/11: Functionalist vs. Conflict Theories

Wed, 4/13: Caste vs. Class Systems

Fri, 4/15: Social Class

Readings: Ferguson readings 15, 24, 26, and 55

Week 14: Education and Social Inequality

Mon, 4/18: The Functionalist Theory of Education

Wed, 4/20: The Conflict Theory of Education

Fri, 4/22: Education and Social Inequality

Readings:

- Ferguson readings 50, 51, and 52
- Eduardo Porter, “Education Gap Between Rich and Poor is Growing Wider”, The New York Times, September 22, 2015, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/23/business/economy/education-gap-between-rich-and-poor-is-growing-wider.html?ribbon-ad-idx=3&rref=business&module=Ribbon&version=context®ion=Header&action=click&contentCollection=Business%20Day&pgtype=article&r=1>

Week 15: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Mon, 4/25: Film

Wed, 4/27: The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity

Fri, 4/29: Prejudice and Discrimination

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

Week 16: Gender Inequality

Mon, 5/2: Gender

Wed, 5/4: Film

Fri, 5/6: Gender Inequality

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

Week 17: Conclusion

Mon, 5/9: Conclusion

Wed, 5/11: No Class

Fri, 5/13: No Class

Final Exam Handed Out 5/9; Due 5/16 by 9:00 a.m.