

SYLLABUS FOR SOC*K101: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY ON-LINE

Course: SOC*K101

Course Title: Principles of Sociology

Course Schedule: On-Line

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., and by appointment

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. Course Objectives and 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 final course grade will be based on the following components:

- You will receive an overall discussion grade based on your participation in weekly discussions that will count for 20% of your final grade.
- Two out of class assignments will count for a total of 15% of your final grade (7.5% each)
- Three exams—the first two will count for 15% of your final grade, and the final exam will count for 20% of your final grade
- A final project will count for 15% of your final grade

Your overall discussion grade will be determined by calculating the average of your weekly discussion grades. Each week, you will receive a letter grade based on the number of posts you make, the quality of your posts, and whether you post throughout the week. In judging the quality of your posts, I will consider factors such as how long they are, how much effort you seem to be putting into them, how effectively you address topics and questions I introduce, and whether they are introducing new information (such as relevant websites, for example) and points that enhance the discussion. **You will need to post at least 3 times each week to receive an A, although 3 posts by itself will not result in an A or even a good grade if the other criteria just discussed are not satisfactorily met.** Weekly discussions will be closed to comments by 9:00 a.m. the following week when a new weekly learning module is posted.

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor quality writing, including poor spelling and grammar, will negatively affect your grade. **You should proof read all work before it is submitted and use the Spell Check and Thesaurus functions that are available in Word or other software programs.** If you need assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to visit The Writing Center in room C117.

All assignments and exams are due at specified times. Work received up to one day late will receive up to a partial letter grade deduction. Work received more than one day late will receive a full letter grade deduction. Once I have graded and returned assignments and exams, late work will no longer be accepted without my permission. **Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects appropriate effort.**

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.

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.

III. Course Schedule

The following schedule is a list of the lecture topics that are intended to be covered each week as well as the required readings for the week. Any revisions will be announced during the course.

Part I. Sociology as Social Science

Sunday 1/24 Week 1: The Sociological Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 1, 2, and 3

Sunday 1/31 Week 2: Sociological Theory

Readings:

- 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>

Sunday 2/7 Week 3: 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

Assignment 1 posted; due Sunday 2/14 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 2/14 Week 4: Theoretical Perspectives

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

Exam 1 posted; due Sunday 2/21 by 9:00 a.m.

Part II: Culture and Social Structure

Sunday 2/21 Week 5: Culture

Readings: Ferguson readings 10, 11, and 12

Assignment 2 posted; due Sunday 3/6 at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 2/28 Week 6: Socialization

Readings: Ferguson readings 13, 14, and 16

Sunday 3/6 Week 7: Deviant Behavior and Social Control

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

Sunday 3/13 Week 8: Social Structure

Readings: Ferguson readings 17 and 18

Final project posted; due Sunday 5/1 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 3/20 Week 9: Spring Break—No Class

Sunday 3/27 Week 10: 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 Sunday 4/3 by 9:00 a.m.

Part III: Social Inequality

Sunday 4/3 Week 11: Social Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 23, 41, and 43

Sunday 4/10 Week 12: Social Stratification and Social Class

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

Sunday 4/17 Week 13: Education

Readings: Ferguson readings 50, 51, and 52

Sunday 4/24 Week 14: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

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

Sunday 5/1 Week 15: Gender Inequality

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

Sunday 5/8 Week 16: Final Week

Final Exam posted; due Sunday 5/15 by 9:00 a.m.