

Sociology 111-06
Principles of Sociology
Spring 2007

Instructor: Kathryn Brown-Tracy
Class: 9:00-11:45 F; Mohegan Campus, Room 108
Office Hours: After class, e-mail or phone for appointment.
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Course Description

This course is a study of the major concepts used in the field of sociology. The nature of institutions will be examined both individually and in their dynamic interrelationship. Emphasis is placed on understanding the impact of society on our lives, and on increasing our effectiveness in controlling our destinies.

A range of sociological topics will be covered. We begin the course by discussing sociological perspectives, sociological methods, socialization, gender stratification, class inequality, and race and ethnic relations. Thereafter, we examine some of the major social institutions society, including health and health care, the economy, the family, and education. We end the course by discussing social change and social movements.

Required Reading

Sociology In Our Times Sixth Edition, by Diana Kendall
The Color of Water, by James McBride

Course Goals

- To develop and use a sociological imagination as a tool for understanding the basic concepts, theoretical perspectives and methods of inquiry.
- To achieve an understanding of the connection between our personal experiences, the social context, and historical period in which we live.
- To examine how various social forces control and shape individual lives and whole cultures.
- To strengthen critical thinking skills and analytical skills by reading and writing critically and integrating ideas and concepts from the course material.
- To apply critical thinking skills to understand social problems and relationships between social forces and individual perceptions.
- To learn ways to transform personal, social relationships and structures.

Class Format

The in-class format will be a combination of small group discussion, some lecture, open discussion and small group activities. I will attempt in as much as possible to be a facilitator for student learning, rather than a disseminator of information. Class discussion in small groups and as a whole will form the most significant learning mode.

Participation is essential to making this class a success. Each individual brings a wealth of knowledge and experience—we can all learn together through sharing our respective insights.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is expected. A sign-in sheet is provided to note attendance and absences. Missing more than two classes will be very problematic for you finishing in good standing. If you miss class more than two times, 5 points will be taken off your final grade for each additional missed class.

Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in the course, by being prepared for and participating in all class sessions. **Reading the assignments before class is necessary for good discussions.** As you read, keep the following questions in mind:

What is the reading about?

What is the main point?

Are the arguments persuasive?

Does the analysis apply to my life/culture?

What is the most interesting thing I learned from the reading?

You will be responsible for reading all of the chapters assigned in the textbook even if class lectures do not cover each chapter in depth. Rather than try to cover everything on the surface we will delve deeper into select chapters as time allows.

Assignments: All assignments must be turned in on time. I do not expect anyone to hand these assignments in late except in case of a documented serious illness or emergency. In this case, contact the instructor to arrange for an alternative due date. **One point will be taken off for each day a take home exam is late.**

Return of assignments: exams will be returned 1-2 weeks after they are due.

Writing Center/Tutoring Center: if you find yourself struggling with any aspect of the course work please make an appointment to see me or seek help from the Writing Center or the Tutoring and Academic Success Center.

Disabilities statement: do you have a disability which may require modifications in assignments or classroom participation? If so, please get in touch with me early in the semester, so we can make arrangements. Also, if have not already done, please communicate with the Disabled Student Counselor, or Chris Scarborough, who coordinate services to students with disabilities.

Course Requirements and Grading

Exam 1, Exam 2	100 pts.	25%
Analytical Paper	100 pts.	25%
Research Paper	200 pts	50%
Total	400 pts	100%

Grading scale:

A = 400-360 points **Excellent work:** Demonstrates comprehensive command of the theories and principles from the course, exceptional ability to apply concepts and superior ability to creatively and appropriately organize and express ideas.

B = 359–320 points **Good work:** Demonstrates solid command of the theories and principles from the course, ability to apply concepts with only minor problems, and good organization and expression of ideas.

C = 319-280 points **Fair work:** Demonstrates acceptable command of the theories and principles from the course, basic ability to apply concepts, and moderate skill in organization and expression of ideas.

D = 279-240 points **Marginal work:** Demonstrates little command of the theories and principles from the course, some attempt at applying concepts, and limited ability to organize and express ideas.

F = 239 or below **Unacceptable work:** Demonstrates lack of command of the subject matter, unable to appropriately and consistently apply concepts, and inconsistent use of format to organize ideas.

I will also take off points for misspelling, grammatical errors, and bad sentence structure. I strongly advise you to consult with a writing tutor, if necessary, and edit your work before you turn it in.

Students' grades will be determined by the following elements:

1. **Exams:** There will be two take-home exams. Essay exams will offer a choice of questions. You will receive these ahead of time. The main goal of the class is to apply critical thinking skills; writing is the best measure of understanding. **Test dates:** Exam 1: 2/16 essays due 2/23; Exam 2: 3/16 essays due 3/30.
2. **Analytical Paper Due 4/27**
3. **Research Paper: Due 5/11**

Sociology 111-06
Course Outline

PART 1 ▪ STUDYING SOCIETY AND SOCIAL LIFE

Week 1 1/19 The Sociological Perspective
Kendall, Chapter 1
Begin reading **The Color of Water** immediately

Week 2 1/26 Sociological Research Methods
Kendall, Chapter 2

Week 3 2/2 Culture
Kendall, Chapter 3

Week 4 2/9 Socialization
Kendall, Chapter 4
Discussion *The Color of Water*

PART 2 ▪ SOCIAL GROUPS AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Week 5 2/16 Society, Social Structure, and Interaction
Kendall, Chapter 5 **Exam 1 (chapters 1-6)**
Groups and organizations
Kendall, Chapter 6

Week 6 2/23 Deviance and Crime
Kendall, Chapter 7 **Exam 1 essays due**
Movie *Cheaters*

Week 7 3/2 Class and Stratification in the United States
Kendall, Chapter 8
Activity: Stratification, Social Class, and Distribution of Wealth

PART 3 ▪ SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Week 8 3/9 Global Stratification
Kendall, Chapter 9

Week 9 3/16 Race and Ethnicity *Class Activity: Race and*
Kendall, Chapter 10 *Gender Stereotypes.*
Sex and Gender
Kendall, Chapter 11 **Exam 2 (chapters 7-11)**

Week 10 3/23 Spring Break/No Class

**Sociology 111-06
Course Outline**

Week 11 3/30 Aging and Inequality Based on Age
Kendall, Chapter 12 **Exam 2 essays due**
Guest Speaker: Lisa Luck

PART 4 • SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Week 12 4/6 No Classes

Week 13 4/13 Families and Intimate Relationships
Kendall, Chapter 15
Finish and Discuss *The Color of Water*

Week 14 4/20 Education
Kendall, Chapter 16

Week 15 4/27 Health, Health Care, and Disability
Kendall, Chapter 18 **Analytical Paper Due**

Week 16 5/4 Collective Behavior, Social Movements, and Social Change
Kendall Chapter 20

Week 17 5/11 Research Paper Due

Take Home Exams: Due 2/23 and 3/30

Criteria for grading the take-home exams:

Your grade for the exams will be based on the following criteria:

1. Understanding and effort: does the writing demonstrate a full knowledge of the relevant assigned readings and class lectures. Was effort put into understanding the questions, reviewing the readings and class notes, and answering the questions thoroughly?
2. Does the writing communicate clearly? That is, is the paper well organized, with a good amount of detail in the presentation? Is it free from major errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling typos, etc.? **Good writing requires revisions and proofreading. Allot yourself enough time to edit and revise your exams.**

Analytical Paper: Due 4/27

You will write an essay (approximately 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) on the memoir, *The Color of Water*, by James McBride. The paper will reflect on and analyze the book using **conceptual tools from class**.

The following will be considered when evaluating your paper:

1. Does the author demonstrate an understanding of important sociological concepts, theories and issues?
2. Does the paper adequately and effectively use evidence?
3. How creative is the author (e.g. introduces new ideas, integrates material in an innovative way)?
4. Is the paper well-written in regard to clarity, grammar, and spelling?
5. Does the paper flow in the sentence, paragraph, and paper-as-a-whole? Does the paper make a coherent argument or statement?

Research Paper: Due 5/11

Write a 5-7 page paper addressing the following question. This paper must be typed, double-spaced, with standard margins, and 12 pt. font. It is expected that the paper be checked for proper grammar and spelling errors.

1. Choose a topic or issue from this course.
Examples: Gender Difference and Gender Inequality
Poverty
Violence
2. Explain why this issue is particularly interesting or important to you (for example, it is personally relevant, politically important, and/or intellectually stimulating).
3. What is the sociological significance of this issue? In other words, analyze the issue using a sociological framework. You should make extensive use of the reading and lecture material from this course.
4. How do you see that social change could (or should) be brought about in this area?
5. What steps could you take toward social change in this area?

The following will be considered when evaluating your paper:

1. Does the author demonstrate an understanding of important sociological concepts, theories and issues?
2. Does the paper adequately and effectively use evidence?
3. How creative is the author (e.g. introduces new ideas, integrates material in an innovative way)?
4. Is the paper well-written in regard to clarity, grammar, and spelling?
5. Does the paper flow in the sentence, paragraph and paper-as-a-whole? Does the paper make a coherent argument or statement)?

Structure your paper roughly as follows: 1-2 pages explaining why the issue you chose is significant or interesting to you; 3-4 pages analyzing the issue sociologically (the heart of the paper); 1-2 pages discussing social change in regard to your issue.