

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

Course: SOC\*K101

Course Title: Principles of Sociology

Course Schedule: On-Line

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Office Hours: Tues 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., or by appointment

### **I. Course Description**

Sociology is the study of groups, organizations, institutions, and societies, and their influences on human behavior. Sociology goes beyond individual and psychological explanations of human behavior by examining the 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 inequality, and the way they influence how we think and act both individually and collectively. 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. 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 also be introduced to various prominent theorists in the history of sociology, such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, and Goffman.

### **II. Course Objectives and Outcomes**

In this course, you will be expected to meet the following course objectives:

- Read and analyze primary sociological writings
- Demonstrate knowledge of the research process
- Demonstrate knowledge of major figures in the field of sociology
- Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives in sociology

- Demonstrate an understanding of how social factors and society as a whole influence individual and group values, attitudes, and beliefs
- Develop an understanding of cultural differences within American society and around the globe
- Develop an understanding of social inequality in American society

Learning outcomes refer to knowledge, skills, and abilities you should develop from this course. The learning outcomes for the course are:

- 1) Critical Thinking: To analyze and evaluate argumentation and persuasion in order to improve, refine, and refute it.
- 2) Global Awareness: To examine the effect of historical and contemporary national and international events and trends on social, political and cultural institutions.
- 3) Scientific Inquiry: To understand and utilize social scientific research methods for analyzing the social world
- 4) Communication: To understand and convey ideas using reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 5) Information Literacy: To assess what information is needed to answer questions and solve problems and to retrieve, evaluate, and use that information effectively.
- 6) Responsible Citizenship: To understand how individual attitudes and behaviors affect societies and to use that understanding for ethical decisions and actions in personal, professional, and social life.

### **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 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 assignment will count for 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 relevant they are, 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.** Class participation will help boost your final GPA for the course.

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 that may affect your progress in this course, please meet with a Disability Service Provider (DSP) as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

<p align="center"><b>TRCC Disabilities Service Providers</b> Counseling &amp; Advising Office Room A-119</p>	
<p><b>Matt Liscum</b> (860) 383-5240</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Disabilities</li> <li>• Sensory Disabilities</li> <li>• Medical Disabilities</li> <li>• Mental Health Disabilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chris Scarborough</b> (860) 892-5751</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Disabilities</li> <li>• ADD/ADHD</li> <li>• Autism Spectrum</li> </ul>

### 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**

Friday 1/24 Week 1: The Sociological Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 1, 2, and 3

Friday 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Durkheim)
- “Emile Durkheim on Suicide” at <http://www2.uvawise.edu/pww8y/Soc/-Theorists/Durkheim/Suicide.html>

Friday 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](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/books/16grimes.html?_r=0)

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

Friday 2/14 Week 4: Theoretical Perspectives

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

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

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

Friday 2/21 Week 5: Culture

Readings: Ferguson readings 10, 11, and 12

**Assignment 2 posted; due Friday 3/7 at 9:00 a.m.**

Friday 2/28 Week 6: Socialization

Readings: Ferguson readings 13, 14, and 16

Friday 3/7 Week 7: Deviant Behavior and Social Control

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

Friday 3/14 Week 8: Spring Break

Friday 3/21 Week 9: Social Structure

Readings: Ferguson readings 17 and 18

Friday 3/28 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 Friday 4/4 by 9:00 a.m.**

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

Friday 4/4 Week 11: Social Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 23, 41, and 43

**Final project posted; due Friday 5/2 by 9:00 a.m.**

Friday 4/11 Week 12: Social Stratification and Social Class

Readings: Ferguson readings 24, 26, and 55

Friday 4/18 Week 13: Education

Readings: Ferguson readings 50, 51, and 52

Friday 4/25 Week 14: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

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

Friday 5/2 Week 15: Gender Inequality

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

Friday 5/9 Week 16: Final Week

**Final Exam posted; due Friday 5/16 by 9:00 a.m.**