

Sociology 101-01
Principles of Sociology
Fall 2009

Instructor: Kathryn Brown-Tracy
Class: 3:30-6:15; F
Room: B118

Office Hours: After class or by appointment
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Course Description

This course is a study of the major concepts used in the field of sociology. 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 to be covered are sociological perspectives, sociological methods, socialization, gender stratification, class inequality, and race and ethnic relations. We will examine some of the major social institutions in society, including the family and education.

Why Take a Sociology Course?

Do women and men have different styles of communicating? When someone asks, "How are you?" what is it they really want to know? Why does 1% of the United States population own 40% of the nation's wealth? Why do we call people Latino or Asian-American when not all Latinos or Asian-Americans look the same, are from the same country or even speak the same language? These are the kinds of questions sociology can help us answer. Bring your imagination, and burning curiosity about the world and the people in it and we'll learn why sociology should matter to you.

Required Reading

Sociology in our times The Essentials SEVENTH EDITION, by Diana Kendall

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.
- Developing an understanding and tolerance for different peoples and viewpoints.

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. 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: I expect all assignments to be turned in by the due date indicated in this syllabus. However, I am aware that this expectation is not always met. As a result, I will be using the following late policy for all assignments submitted past the indicated due date:

1. Students must receive permission from the instructor in order to submit a late assignment.
2. Each student is granted one grace period for late assignments. The grace period for submission of written assignments is the following day (Monday – Friday) by 5:00 p.m. Papers not submitted in class must be turned in to the instructor's mailbox. If a student is using the grace period for an assignment, please notify me.
3. After the grace period has passed, I will deduct one letter grade per day (Monday – Friday) that the assignment is late.
4. Students who do not use their grace period will receive **3 bonus points** at the end of the semester.
5. Accepted extenuating circumstances include inclement weather, illness, family death or other emergency, and other situations discussed with me. You will not lose points or use up your grace period in these situations. You must contact me as soon as possible to discuss these circumstances.

NOTE: Adjustments or changes to the syllabus may be made by the instructor with appropriate student notification

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

Mid-Term Exam	100 pts.	25%
Final Exam	100 pts.	25%
Mini-Project	100 pts.	25%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>100 pts</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	400 pts	100%

Grading scale:

A = 400-360 points

B = 359–320 points

C = 319-280 points

D = 279-240 points

F = 239 or below

Students' grades will be determined by the following elements:

1. **Mid-Term Exam** – To evaluate your progresses, I will give an in-class exam on **October 2nd**. This exam will consist of 10 short answer questions and 25 multiple choice questions to be answered in class and a take-home essay portion. The essay questions will be distributed at least one week prior to the exam and will be due in class on the date of the exam.
2. **Final Exam**-Again this in-class exam will consist of 10 short answer questions and 25 multiple choice questions. The essay questions will be distributed at least one week prior to the exam and will be due in class on the **December 4th**, the date of the exam.
3. **A Mini-Project**- The project you must complete for this course is designed to make you conscious of what it means to act as a sociologist. The project is also aimed at personal growth. It is not a term paper, but is to be a brief report of around 4 to 5 pages. The project must be typed, double-spaced on one side of the paper only. Neatness and proper grammar are assumed expectations. The due date is **November 13th**.
4. **Research Paper** – Choose a topic or issue, to research in-depth, from this course. For example, Gender Difference and Gender Inequality, Poverty, or Violence. You will write a 5-7 page paper. 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. Paper is due **December 11th**.

Sociology 101-06
Course Outline

Week 1 8/28	Class Overview/Introduction
Week 2 9/4	The Sociological Perspective and Research Process Kendall, Chapter 1
Week 3 9/11	Culture Kendall, Chapter 2
Week 4 9/18	Socialization Kendall, Chapter 3
Week 5 9/25	Social Structure and Interaction in Everyday Life Kendall, Chapter 4
Week 6 10/2	Groups and Organization Kendall, Chapter 5 Mid-Term Exam
Week 7 10/9	Deviance and Crime Kendall, Chapter 6 Movie: <i>Cheaters</i>
Week 8 10/16	Class and Stratification in the United States Kendall Chapter 7 <i>Activity: Stratification, Social Class, and Distribution of Wealth</i>
Week 9 10/23	Race and Ethnicity Kendall, Chapter 9 <i>Class Activity: Race/Gender Stereotypes</i>
Week 10 10/30	Sex and Gender Kendall, Chapter 10 <i>Guest Speaker Lisa Luck</i>
Week 11 11/6	Families and Intimate Relationships, continued Kendall, Chapter 11 Guest Speaker Darcie Folsom: <i>Women's Center of SEC</i>
Week 12 11/13	Education Kendall, Chapter 12 <i>Video: Freedom Writers/discussion questions</i> Mini-Project Due
Week 13 11/20	Collective Behavior, Social Movements, and Social Change Kendall, Chapter 13
Week 14 11/27	No Class/ Thanksgiving Recess
Week 15 12/4	Final Exam
Week 16 12/11	Research Paper Due

Mini-Project- Choose one of the following projects.

Due 11/13

A. Mapping Your Own Status/Role Sets

Answer the following in chronological order:

1. In one column, list all of your current positions or statuses in order of their importance to you, starting with most important, and then going to least important. In a second column, next to the first, list the role-sets related to each status. For each status, note whether it is primarily ascribed, primarily achieved, or mixture.
2. Now discuss "Who Am I?" on the basis of the mapping you just did. Discuss why you rank-ordered as you did and why you seem to identify with them. Do you have a master status? Which one?
3. Now discuss the presence of conflicts you experience between the statuses and also between a status and its role reciprocals within the role set. How do you usually handle and relieve such strain? Some say that, when we are confronted with conflicting expectations, we follow the one which is more important to us, involves the strong sanctions, and carries the more specific obligations. Comment in relation to your situations.
4. Finally, comment on the applicability of social control. For example, how much do you feel controlled by the expectations of your status? Do you feel you can reject some of them if too controlling? How much of a voice do you have in determining who you are? Does this vary by the age, sex, etc. of the person involved? Finally, are you pretty much the sum of your statuses, or are you more than these?

B. Description of Change in Two Generations of the Same Family

This assignment involves exploring your cultural heritage by analyzing your family across two generations. Specifically, you are asked to compare your family (as it was when you were in high school) with the family of one of your parents (as it existed when your parent was of high school age). Rather than relying on your own impressions and recollections to answer the following questions, you will find it helpful to interview as many of your relatives as possible.

1. Family composition: Outline the kinship structure of each household. Specify the age of each family member.
2. Cultural heritage: What are the ethnic and religious ties of each family member? Specify how and to what extent these ties permeated family life, including your family and your parent's family.
3. Social Class Position: Specify the occupation, income and education of each parental pair to determine the socioeconomic status of their respective households, including your family and your parent's family.
4. Sex-roles: What were the sex-role patterns in each family? How and to what extent were these patterns reflected in the division of labor and the authority structure of each? Examine your family and your parent's family.
5. Parent-Child Relation: What kind of parent-child interactions were encouraged? What differences existed between the maternal and paternal roles? What was expected of children, and what types of discipline were employed? Examine your family and your parent's family.
6. Family solidarity: What is your assessment of the character and strength of the family bond?, Examine your family and your parent's family.
7. Specify the procedures you employed to gather information. What difficulties did you encounter? Also, if there are areas where the respondents did not want to answer, please report that.

C. My Experiences as a Member of a Minority or Majority

For example, ethnic, racial, religious, sex, age, political, physical, etc. Analyze a specific situation or your general experience as a member of a majority or a minority group. Discuss your attitudes and behavior and that of others toward you.

Research Paper Due 12/11

You will write a paper on a controversial topic that is of sociological importance. For example, you can write on specific issues within the broad category of education, health, crime, race, class, gender, family, and so forth using theories, conceptual frameworks, statistics, or some other aspect of sociological insight in your assessment. You can investigate the pros and cons of a particular issue, say, use of the internet. Or you can take a side on an issue, for example, the role of prisons in our society. Past papers have addressed the structural-functionalist perspective on abortions, the increasing occurrences of road rage, and the importance of marriage in our society. This paper should present your ideas and voice about some issue that motivates you and that genuinely interests you. I am not looking for a particular answer or what you may perceive as something I want to read. I want to read a well-written, thoughtful, and analytical paper that is supported with scholarly evidence from books and academic journals, excluding the one for this class (so, you cannot use the book in this class in your bibliography, although you may use it to generate ideas). The assignment is due on December 11. Five points will be awarded to the overall score if you take your paper to the Writing center and I receive word via email that someone read over your paper.

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.
2. Once you pick a research topic, form a research question. For example, I am particularly interested in the topic of hate crimes. My research question is "What factors are associated with hate crimes?" Explain why this issue is particularly interesting or important to you (for example, it is personally relevant, politically important, and/or intellectually stimulating).
3. In order to answer your research question, go to our on line electronic resources and pick the search engine InfoTrac. Once at the search engine, you will need to type in key phrases or words specific to your topic. Use a minimum of 5 books and articles where the full article is available, not just the abstract to answer your research question.
4. What is the sociological significance of this issue? In other words, analyze the issue using a sociological framework.
5. How do you see that social change could (or should) be brought about in this area? 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?
6. Does the paper make a coherent argument or statement?

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