

SOC K101 ✦ PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY

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2012 Spring semester ✦ Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am to 10:45am ✦ Room D109

Office Hours: by appointment

The first fruit of [the sociological] imagination – and the first lesson of the social science that embodies it – is the idea that the individual can understand his[her] own experience and gauge his[her] own fate only by locating him[her]self within his[her] period, that he[she] can know his[her] own chances in life by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his[her] circumstances. In many ways it is a terrible lesson; in many ways a magnificent one.” C. Wright Mills

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, you will be introduced to the sociological perspective and learn to use the sociological imagination to explore the organization and regulation of social life. We will analyze social structure and its component elements as we re-examine our views of social relationships, organizations, institutions, and social categories. We will investigate social inequality and the mechanisms that reinforce and perpetuate it and how inequality might be challenged and changed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course, a student should have the following skills and abilities:

- the ability to utilize critical thinking skills for analysis of society and human group behavior
- an understanding of how to use sociological concepts to understand and analyze cultures and societies
- the ability to utilize systematic inquiry for analyzing the social world
- an understanding of our role as individuals in making, maintaining, and changing society.

REQUIRED TEXT

Skolnick, Jerome H. and Elliott Currie. 2011. *Crisis in American Institutions*, 14th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Readings for each class are listed in the course outline to follow and are also posted on the Blackboard page for this class. Readings must be completed before class on the day it is listed. You are responsible for all assigned reading, whether or not it is discussed in class. This means that even when we do not explicitly cover certain material from the readings in class, you may still be tested on it.

CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Participation in class discussion is essential. It is a graded element of this course and is fundamental to effective learning. The exams will be based in part on in-class discussions and activities, so your presence at every class is extremely important to your grade, as is your active and involved participation. Full participation is weighted significantly higher than simply attending, no matter how regularly you attend. Your presence/absence will be duly noted each

class. More than two absences may lower your final grade by one letter. It is your responsibility to be sure that your presence in class is accounted for by signing in each class meeting.

Merely being present in class is just the beginning. I will use the following criteria to evaluate your participation:

- ✦ Frequency and clarity of your oral contributions. Are you making an effort to contribute to class discussion? Is it evident that you have prepared for class?
- ✦ Knowledge of the reading material and your ability to grasp its central themes. How carefully and critically did you read?
- ✦ Your ability to take an independent and reflective stance toward ideas under discussion. Are you willing to think creatively?
- ✦ The overall development of your power of oral expression during the course of the semester. Do you demonstrate increased willingness and ability to contribute to class discussion as the course progresses?

Attendance and participation is worth 20% of your course grade.

IN-CLASS EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

This class is set up as a forum for discussion and interaction among all of us. Some of this interaction will be informal and some of it will be structured as exercises or assignments, done individually and in small groups. These structured interactions will be graded and may not be made up if you are not present in class. Any materials that you must bring to class in order to complete an exercise or assignment are noted in the course outline to follow. Not all of the exercises require extra materials. **In-class exercises and assignments are worth 20% of your course grade.**

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

You will write three sociological analyses over the course of the semester. These papers will each be 3 pages in length and must be typewritten. Detailed instructions on each paper are provided in a separate and are also posted on the Blackboard page for this class. **Each paper is worth 10% of your course grade.**

EXAMS

There will be two exams; one during the semester as the Midterm mark, and one during Finals Week at the end of the semester. The final exam requires you to understand all previous material to be able to successfully complete it. All exams are open-book and open-notes exams. You must use your **own books** and your **own notes** for the exams. I will provide details about each exam when the exam dates approach. **Each exam is worth 15% of your grade.**

GRADING

I expect all assigned work to be handed in on the day it is due. I will not accept late work. An alternative due date is acceptable only under extraordinary circumstances and with at least one week's advance notice.

Exams and your final grade for the course will be evaluated on a conventional A to F scale.

A 95 - 100
A- 90 - 94
B+ 87 - 89

B 84 - 86
B- 80 - 83
C+ 77 - 79

C 74 - 76
C- 70 - 73
D+ 67 - 69

In-class Exercises and Assignments and Sociological Analyses will be graded on a scale from 1 to 10. I will evaluate this work based on the following criteria:

- 10** Extraordinary, thoughtful engagement with the topic(s). Work that goes well beyond assignment requirements.
- 7 - 9** Organized, insightful work that fulfills all assignment criteria. Cogent, technically clean writing.
- 4 - 6** Demonstrated engagement with the reading; shows that you are thinking. Relatively coherent and technically adequate.
- 1 - 3** Poorly organized. Does not convey any thinking. Structurally and technically so inadequate that following what you have to say is a challenge.

EXTRA CREDIT

There will be no opportunities for extra credit. As long as you do the work outlined here, participate in discussion, and attend all classes, you will do well in the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to a useful education. Failure to act with academic integrity severely limits a person's ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, academic dishonesty erodes the legitimacy of every degree awarded by the College. In this class and in the course of your academic career, present only your own best work; clearly document the sources of the material you use from others; and act at all times with honor. If you present someone else's work as your own (including cheating on assignments or exams and/or plagiarizing on assignments or papers), you will **automatically fail** the class.

DISABILITIES

In addition to contacting me, if you have a disability which may affect your work in this course, please contact Chris Scarborough (892-5751) if you have a learning disability or ADD. Please contact Judy Hilburger (892-5744) or Matt Liscum (383-5240) if you have a physical, visual, hearing, or psychiatric disability.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class only if they are **turned off** or turned to a **silent mode**. Vibrating mode is not allowed, as it can sometimes be heard. Under no circumstances are you to answer your phone or text message in class. If you answer your phone or text, I will take your phone until the end of class.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Some of the material in this course involves issues, language, and areas that are sensitive in nature. Sociology courses can sometimes bring about unsettling feelings as they address personal matters as well as academic matters. This course will draw on our experiential knowledge as well as our cognitive understandings. It is important for us to be especially aware of the unique learning process in which we are involved and to insure a level of sensitivity for others' needs, feelings, and struggles.

For productive class interaction, I suggest that we all follow certain guidelines:

- ✦ Listen attentively to whoever is speaking and do not interrupt.
- ✦ Acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination based on social categories exist.
- ✦ Understand that we have all learned misinformation about these social categories.
- ✦ Agree not blame ourselves or others for this misinformation while accepting responsibility for not repeating such misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
- ✦ Never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences, backgrounds, or statements. This doesn’t mean that you can’t disagree, only that you must do so respectfully.

Please note that I run a low-tech classroom. I do not post or hand out my lecture notes, conduct PowerPoint lectures, or expect online discussions/submissions. I do write out my notes as you write yours, pause for your contributions, and expect in-person interaction.

Please see me if you have any special issues that have the potential to interfere with your completion of the course requirements. This may include but is not limited to: extreme shyness; difficulty with English; learning disability; physical disability; severe test anxiety; personal life issues; etc. I will work with you to find a suitable arrangement. You must come to see me about this *within the first week of class or within one week of an issue’s occurrence.*

This syllabus serves as a general guide for students of SOCI K101. It is subject to change based on class discussion, class activities, and current events. You will help shape what we pursue and what we emphasize. If the syllabus needs to be adjusted, changes will be noted in class. If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out about any changes.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 10 ✦ Introduction to SOCI K101

Jan 24 ✦ Sociological Imagination

Readings:

Chapter 6 p. 62 – 71 Generation Broke
Chapter 33 p. 297 – 302 The Shame of the Nation

Jan 26 ✦ Sociological Imagination

Readings:

Chapter 4 p. 40 – 46 Water for Profit

Jan 31 ✦ Theoretical Perspectives

Readings:

p. 1 – 13 Approaches to Social Problems
Chapter 28 p. 247 – 259 The Underclass Label

Feb 2 ✦ No Classes Held

Feb 7 ✦ Social Structure & Inequality

Readings:

p. 83 – 85 Inequality
Chapter 27 p. 239 – 246 Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men
Chapter 29 p. 260 – 269 Flat Broke with Children

Feb 9 ✦ Social Structure & Inequality

Readings:

Chapter 9 p. 86 – 90 Increasing Inequality in the United States

Feb 14 ✦ Economy

Readings:

p. 17 – 19 Corporate Power
Chapter 2 p. 27 – 32 Tax Cheats and Their Enablers
Chapter 40 p. 364 – 371 Unjust Rewards

Feb 16 ✦ Economy

Readings:

Chapter 8 p. 79 – 82 The Squandering of America
Chapter 25 p. 218 – 224 Smoke, Mirrors & Hot Air

Feb 21 ✦ Economy

Readings:

p. 47 – 49 Economic Crisis
Chapter 12 p. 107 – 115 As Rich–Poor Gap Widens in U.S. ...
Chapter 16 p. 134 – 140 “They Take Our Jobs!”

Due:

Paper Assignment 1 Applying the Sociological Imagination

Feb 23 ✦ Work

Readings:

Chapter 7 p. 72 – 78

Retirement's Unraveling Safety Net

Feb 28 ✦ Work

Readings:

p. 227 – 229

Work and Welfare

Chapter 1 p. 20 – 26

Take the Rich off Welfare

Mar 1 ✦ Work

Readings:

Chapter 5 p. 50 – 61

Nickel-and-Dimed

Chapter 11 p. 11 – 106

Day by Day

Mar 6 ✦ Environment

Readings:

p. 199 – 201

The Environment

Chapter 23 p. 202 – 207

A World of Wounds

Chapter 24 p. 208 – 217

Diamond

Mar 8 ✦ Education

Readings:

p. 295 – 296

The Schools

Chapter 35 p. 20 – 26

Schools as Scapegoats

Mar 13 ✦ Education

Readings:

Chapter 34 p. 303 – 308

Class Conflict

Chapter 36 p. 316 – 322

Hired Education

Mar 15 ✦ Midterm Exam

Due:

Paper Assignment 2

Analysis of Experience in Educational Context

Mar 20 ✦ Spring Break - No Classes Held

Mar 22 ✦ Spring Break - No Classes Held

Mar 27 ✦ Health & Medical Care

Readings:

p. 271 – 273

Health and Medical Care

Chapter 30 p. 274 – 280

Sick Out of Luck

Chapter 32 p. 289 – 294

The Untold Health Care Story

Mar 29 ✦ Health & Medical Care

Readings:

Chapter 31 p. 281 – 288

Why Not the Best?

Apr 3 ✦ Racism

Readings:

p. 113 - 115

Chapter 13 p. 116 - 121

Chapter 15 p. 128 - 133

Racism

The Roots of White Advantage

At Many Colleges, the Rich Kids Get ...

Apr 5 ✦ Racism

Readings:

Chapter 14 p. 122 - 127

Schools and Prisons

Apr 10 ✦ Crime & Justice

Readings:

p. 323 - 324

Chapter 38 p. 335 - 352

Crime and Justice

Wild Pitch

Apr 12 ✦ Crime & Justice

Readings:

Chapter 37 p. 325- 334

Chapter 39 p. 353 - 363

The Myth of Leniency

One in 100

Apr 17 ✦ Sexism

Readings:

p. 141 - 142

Chapter 18 p. 150 - 164

Chapter 19 p. 165 - 172

Sexism

Drawing the Line

Learning Silence

Apr 19 ✦ Sexism

Readings:

Chapter 17 p. 143 - 149

The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling

Apr 24 ✦ Family

Readings:

p. 175 - 176

Chapter 20 p. 177 - 185

The Family

Beyond the "M" Word

Apr 26 ✦ Family

Readings:

Chapter 21 p. 186 - 191

The Kids Aren't Alright

May 1 ✦ Family

Readings:

Chapter 22 p. 192 - 197

Chapter 26 p. 230 - 231

More Than Welcome

Doméstica

May 3 ✦ Social Change

Readings:

Chapter 3 p. 33 - 39

Chapter 10 p. 91 - 97

Due:

Paper Assignment 3

The Commercial

From Poverty to Prosperity

Investigation of Entertainment Reporting