

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

SOCY 100 SECTION 0101, 0301
Introduction to Sociology
Spring 2009

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SYLLABUS

The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals.

- C. Wright Mills

People who like to avoid shocking discoveries, who prefer to believe that society is what they were taught in Sunday School, who like.....the world taken-for-granted, should stay away from sociology.

- Peter Berger

I. PURPOSE

In this introductory course we will introduce you to the promise and excitement of a discipline that springs from humanity's endless quest to understand its social world in hopes of creating a better one. Sociologists explore practically all aspects of social relations: why people create the societies they inhabit; why they behave as they do; and what they can do to more effectively take charge of their lives? There will be an emphasis on explaining the social nature of inequality in all its diverse forms.

The purpose of this course is to provide the students with a basic knowledge of the socio-cultural world that we are born into. For a systematic understanding of society we need to learn a wide range of issues, concepts, approaches, theories, and paradigms that are unique in Sociology. These constitute our tools. Since our society does not exist in isolation from other societies and cultures a global approach will be emphasized, focusing on the interconnectedness of American society and culture with that of other Western and non- Western cultures. Further, this course will also touch on other interrelated areas in the social sciences such as economics, politics, anthropology, history, and social psychology; thus, our approach will be interdisciplinary. Finally, we learn to deal with different views, perspectives, and issues with an open mind while taking nothing for granted. In a way, we are trying to exercise critical thinking. Critical thinking does not imply negating social institutions and practices. Rather, it suggests putting a question mark before every aspect of society and analyzing them carefully and objectively, in order to achieve a systematic and scientific view of society. Ultimately, we intend to help you develop a "sociological imagination", viewing everything in an interrelated, historical & analytical way.

II. COURSE FORMAT

This course will be taught primarily by giving lectures; we will occasionally utilize group discussions, debates, and relevant films as alternative modes of teaching. There is a strong emphasis on **attendance** and **participation**. Participation can take various forms including raising questions, expressing your opinion, introducing relevant issues, topics, or films, and sharing your ideas and experiences. Further, to make the class more dynamic and productive we suggest:

1. Do not miss classes. Students are only allowed four unexcused absences. Missing additional classes **will have an adverse effect on your final grade**.
2. Read the assignments **before** coming to class and **participate** in class discussions. You are expected to be familiar with class assignments. Questions will be regularly asked.
3. Take comprehensive notes. Part of the exam questions are based on my lectures.
4. Do not hesitate to ask your questions or express your opinions about different aspects of the course. My office is always open to you.
5. Do not miss any scheduled examinations; the alternative could be an **oral** examination. Preferably, the instructor needs to be informed about your absence **in advance**. You can only exercise this option **once**. Please call my office or e-mail me in such cases and make sure you provide me with **documents** regarding your absence.

III. GRADING

Your final grade will be based on:

1. A research paper (at least 8 pages long), based on a sociological issue of your choice (20%).
Outlines of your research paper are due April 24 (Look at the appendix).
2. Three equal exams, each covering one-third (1/3) of the course material. (80%).
3. Regular class attendance and participation could improve or reduce your grade (maximum 3%). More than 4 unexcused absences will reduce your attendance grade. If your absences exceed **10** you will lose **5** points. Similarly, lack of class participation will have an adverse effect.
4. A well prepared and relevant presentation (7-8 minutes) may also add a maximum of 3% to your final grade (Optional). Students should inform me about this option **no later** than the first week after the **first exam** by submitting a written proposal including the exact topic, minimum of 3 sociological sources, the rationale for choosing the topic, and an open date for presentation. If you miss this deadline you can not use this option later on.

The following is a numerical breakdown of letter grades:

A range: 100-90, **B** range: 89.9-80, **C** range: 79.9-70, **D** range: 69.9-60

IV. TEXTBOOKS

1. Anthony Giddens, et al., Introduction to Sociology (6th edition), Norton Publishers, 2007 [M]
2. Mehrdad Mashayekhi (compiler), Sociological Understanding of American Society: A Collection of Essays. Thomson Publishing, 2007 [M/M].

V. READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Jan. 26** Introduction to the course
- Jan. 28, 30, Feb 2** What is Sociology?
Fundamental Sociological Concepts & Theories
G: Ch. 1, pp. 116-119/131-134
M/M: Chs.1, 2, 3
- Feb. 4** Film (Roger & Me), Part I
Hornbeak Library, Ground Floor
- Feb. 6, 9** Methods of Sociological Inquiry/Science & Theory
G: Ch. 2
- Feb. 11, 13, 16** Culture
G: Ch. 3
M/M: Chs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- Feb. 18** Film (Roger & Me), Part II
Hornbake Library, Ground Floor
- Feb. 20 23, 25** Glo0balization in a Changing World
G: Ch. 20
M/M: Chs. 14, 15
- Feb. 27** **EXAM I**

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

- Mar. 2, 6, 9, 11** Social Stratification/American Class System
G: Ch. 8 [Oral Outlines Due, optional]
M/M: Chs. 9, 11
- Mar. 4** Film
- Mar. 13** Global Inequality
G: Ch. 9
M/M: Chs. 12, 13

Spring Break

- Mar. 23** Global Inequality
G: Ch 9
- Mar 25** Film
- Mar 27, 30, Apr 1** Race and Ethnicity
G: Ch. 11
M/M: Chs. 16, 17
- Apr. 3, 6** Sex, Gender and Feminism
G: Ch. 10
M/M: Chs. 18, 19, 20
- Apr. 8** Film
- Apr. 10** **EXAM II**

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- Apr. 13, 15, 17** The Sociology of the Family
G: Ch. 15
M/M: Chs. 27, 28
- Apr. 22** Film
- Apr. 20, 24, 27** Politics, the State and Social Movements
G: Ch. 13
M/M: Ch. 29, 30
Research Paper Outlines Due [**April 24**]
- Apr. 29** Reviewing the Outlines
- May 1, 4, 6** The Sociology of Work and the Economy
M: Ch. 14
M/M: Chs. 24, 25, 26
- May 8** Review
- May 11** **EXAM III**
- May 18** Research Papers Due (9:30-10:00 a m) (Only **hard copies** are accepted)

VI. APPENDIX ON FINAL PAPER

The purpose of writing a research paper is to apply your sociological knowledge to specific social issues. Your emphasis should be analytical rather than descriptive. To perform this project the following steps are suggested:

1. Choose a general sociological topic that is of interest to you.
2. Narrow it down to a specific sociological question/hypothesis. Avoid broad issues/questions.
3. Find a minimum of eight sociological/social-scientific sources. At least half of your sources need to be sociological books. The other half could be sociological articles from sociology/social-scientific journals. You are only allowed one article from popular periodicals/magazines (N.Y. Times, Newsweek, Washington Post, etc.) or the internet sources. Try to use only the sources from the 1990s or later. These sources need to be read and cited in your paper.
4. Make sure your paper is as analytical as possible. In other words try to answer/explain a major question. Avoid descriptive writing (i.e., only providing basic information). In other words, you are expected to answer “why” certain issues/behaviors do occur the way they do.
5. Your paper needs to be segmented into sections and subsections. You can do this by separating each section with a new title/subtitle. Look at each Chapter of our text book as a guideline.
6. Your final paper should be at least 8 pages long (excluding the cover sheet, bibliography, and end notes) and double-spaced. Make sure your bibliography provides me with full information: author’s full name, name of the book/article, publisher, date of publication.
7. Submit the paper on or before **May 18 (9:30-10:00 am)**.
8. For more information and consultation, contact me during my office hours.
9. Your research abstract/outline is due **April 24**. It should include the following information:
 - a. Your specific and a brief title
 - b. A brief summary of what you intend to discuss in the paper.
 - c. At least 6 sociological sources (complete information). They will be reviewed and returned to you.
When you submit your paper, the outline has to be attached to it. Otherwise you will lose 3 points.
10. No topic changes are allowed after **April 30**.
11. Please keep an extra copy of your paper in case it is somehow lost.
12. The preferred type of text reference is the parenthetical. (Wilson 1998:19-26)

VII: OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

Core Course

You may have chosen this course as part of your CORE Liberal Arts and Sciences Program, the general education portion of your degree program. CORE Distributive Studies courses are designed to ensure that you will take a look at several different academic disciplines and the way they create and analyze knowledge about the world. A faculty and student committee approved this CORE Distributive Studies course because it will introduce you to ideas and issues that are central to a major intellectual discipline and because it promises to involve you actively in the learning process.

Academic Integrity Expectations

Students and instructors in this course are both responsible for upholding academic integrity and are expected to adhere to the University Honor Code. Violation such as cheating, plagiarism, forged reported to the Student Honor Council and the Office of Judicial Programs. For more information on such violations, reporting procedures, and attached penalties, students are strongly encouraged to review the relevant sections in the “Schedule of Classes.”

Students With Disabilities

If you have a documented physical or learning disability, necessary accommodations will be made. A written request should be made one week prior to each exam for which accommodation is appropriate. University of Maryland documentation of disability needs to be obtained from Disability Support Services (301-314-7682).

Religious Observance Holidays

Students with religious holidays that conflict with the course calendar should inform their instructor of those dates by e-mail within the first week of the semester.