

Introductory Sociology (Anth/Soc 105, Fall 2004)

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Course Statement

Sociology may be defined as a general social science that addresses the intersection of numerous disciplines including philosophy, history, social-psychology, economics, political science and religious studies. Sociology's generality is the discipline's strength *and* weakness. Its generality is its strength in that it provides a theoretical and methodological grounding capable of supporting the study of most any topic pertaining to human existence, for human existence is always, already social and "the structure of social existence" is sociology's primary focus. On the other hand, sociology's generality has left the discipline with an unclear place in academia and society itself. Moreover, because the content of sociology concerns the everyday, taken-for-granted aspects of life, sociology is sometimes criticized for studying the "obvious." The problem with the taken-for-granted aspects of life is that they are meaning producing and significant *even when they are ignored* or taken-for-granted. The primary challenge of sociology, therefore, is to develop a critical awareness of the taken-for-granted structure and content of our social existence in order to address the displaced (hidden) problems that otherwise would not receive intentional analysis and ameliorative action.

There are two primary objectives of this course, both of which are identified by our college's new core curriculum: critical thinking and the ability to understand the "other." These objectives will be pursued by studying the three classical theoretical orientations in sociology and then applying them to critically investigate a variety of social issues, including an issue you personally identify and focus on for your term research paper. In addition, you will learn fascinating theoretical perspectives and interesting research findings; and develop a basic understanding of sociology and social science. Perhaps more importantly, this course will contribute to the development of your own personal philosophy by helping you appropriate a new, powerful conceptual vocabulary.

Expectations

This class will be conducted as a discussion/lecture course. **YOU MUST COMPLETE YOUR READINGS**, and each class meeting will begin with a short response question you must complete to evidence your preparation. We will then launch into a discussion about the reading in relation to the day's specific learning objectives. It should be clear, then, that preparation (reading) and participation (actively joining in class discussions) are absolutely crucial to the quality of outcomes in this class. For this reason, preparation, participation and class attendance is mandatory. Three unexcused absences will qualify you to receive an automatic "F" in this class.

There will be a two-phase term research paper involving a literature review (8-10 pages) and an analysis of your research question examined from one of sociology's traditional paradigms (8-10 pages). Handouts will be provided intermittently to guide your completion of this assignment.

Grading

Class preparation:	15%
Class participation:	10%
Midterm essay exam:	25%
Term paper phase 1:	10%
Term paper phase 2:	15%
Final exam:	25%

Required Texts

The Meaning of Sociology. 2001. Joel Charon, editor. 7th edition.
New York: Prentice Hall.

Sources: Notable Selections in Sociology. 1999. Kurt Finsterbusch, editor. 3d edition.
Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.

This Book is Not Required. 1992.
Inge Bell and Bernard McGrane. Fort Bragg, CA: The Small Press.

Schedule

Thursday	8/26	Course Overview and Objectives
Tuesday	8/31	Sociology and reflexivity. Discuss #1.1 (Berger), #1.2 (Mills) and chapter 1 in Bell/McGrane
Thursday	9/2	Culture, society and paradigms. Discuss #2.2 (Miner)
Tuesday	9/7	Functionalism and Durkheim Discuss handout on "Social Facts (Durkheim).
Thursday	9/9	Durkheim, religion and social order. Discuss handout on religion (Durkheim).
Tuesday	9/14	Durkheim and anomie Discuss handout on Riesman. First phase of paper assignment will be distributed

Thursday	9/16	Marx's analysis of modernization. #51 (Marx) and handout on Marx.
Tuesday	9/21	Capitalism and alienation. Discuss handout on alienation (Marx) Deadline for submitting research topic
Thursday	9/23	Reification Discuss handout on reification.
Tuesday	9/28	Capitalism, the Protestant Ethic and instrumental rationality Discuss handout on Weber; #6.4 (Weber) and chapter 10 in Bell/McGrane.
Thursday	9/30	The instrumental organization of life. Handout on <i>work</i> (Gini and Sullivan) and #11.3 (Ritzer).
Tuesday	10/5	The concept of "human nature." Discuss #7 (Cooley) and #3.1 (G. H. Mead) Phase one of paper assignment (literature review) due
Thursday	10/7	Class does not meet McGowan at conference
Tuesday	10/12	Review for midterm exam.
Thursday	10/14	In-class midterm essay exam
Tuesday	10/19	Fall Break
Thursday	10/21	The social construction of reality
Tuesday	10/26	The phenomenon of socialization. Discuss handout on Berger and Luckmann. Second phase of paper assignment distributed
Thursday	10/28	The phenomenon of institutionalization. Discuss #37 (Berger and Luckmann) and #11 (Dunphy).
Tuesday	11/2	Gender as an example of a foregrounding, constitutive force. Discuss #2.5 (Tannen) and #28 (Howard and Hollander).
Thursday	11/4	Institutions and social controls Discuss chapter 3 in Bell/McGrane.
Tuesday	11/9	Stigma

		Discuss article on Ageism (McGowan).
Thursday	11/11	Socialization and the institution of education. Discuss chapters 3 and 7 in Bell/McGrane and handout (Gracey).
Tuesday	11/16	Social Class Discuss # 20 (Coles) and # 21 (Gans).
Thursday	11/18	Pinto Madness Discuss #11.2 (Dowie) and #5.3 (Kelman and Hamilton).
Tuesday	11/23	Authority and Instrumental Rationality Discuss # 15 (Zimbardo) and #17 (Kelman and Hamilton). Phase two of paper assignment is due
Thursday	11/25	Thanksgiving
Tuesday	11/30	Wisdom and Knowledge Discuss chapters 4 and 5 in Bell/McGrane.
Thursday	12/2	Desocialization and reflexive self understanding Discuss chapter 6 in Bell/McGrane and article (handout) by McGowan.
Tuesday	12/7	Review for final exam.