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ANSO 105-02, Introductory Sociology, Fall 2010

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ANSO 105 Introductory Sociology Fall 2010

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Course Statement

The primary purpose of sociology is to develop a critical awareness of the taken-for-granted social structures and processes that implicitly shape human life. Sociology emerged in the late 19th Century as an attempt to make sense of the profound social-organizational changes resulting from the industrial revolution. As such, it is the discipline that studies the institutional structures and problems resulting from the grand historical process known as *modernization*. Today, sociology faces a new challenge: *how are we to make sense of post-modernization, the profound organizational changes resulting from the digital revolution and globalization?* This question guides the content and focus of this course and will serve as the underlying focus of your term paper assignment.

Sociology is both an empirical social science and a way to view our reality and ourselves. The goal of this course is to teach both of these applications of sociology. You will learn the history of sociology, its key concepts and contributions, and how to apply sociological concepts in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the world and your place in it.

Expectations

In preparation for each week of class you will write a brief essay in response to an assigned question. These weekly response questions are provided on the syllabus and are designed to guide your study of assigned readings and critical reflection. Response essays must be brought to class each Tuesday morning and will serve as a resource for class discussion. The essay should reflect a minimum of three hours of preparation and reflection (in addition to the time spent reading the assignment). Your essays should be single spaced (12 point Times New Roman font) and edited so as not to exceed one page in length.

This class will be conducted as a discussion/lecture course. **YOU MUST COMPLETE YOUR READINGS** and each class meeting will begin with a brief discussion of the question assigned for the week. We will then launch into a discussion about the reading(s) 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 are mandatory. Poor participation will be reflected in your course grade and 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 (5-7 pages) and an analysis of your research question examined from one of sociology's theoretical orientations (5-7 pages). Handouts will be provided to guide your completion of this assignment.

Grading

Weekly response essays:	25%
Midterm essay exam:	25%
Phase 1 of term paper	10%
Phase 2 of term paper	15%
Final exam:	25%

Class participation will be considered carefully when final grades are determined. Excellent participation will earn you a half grade, positive curve in your final grade; poor participation may result in a half grade negative curve.

Required Text

Down to Earth Sociology, 2007. James Henslin, editor, 14th edition.
New York: Free Press.

Thursday	8/26	Course overview: Education, language and dialogue Read for Tuesday: <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> (#3, Mills) Response question #1 (due Tuesday): <i>In what sense might "new media" be considered a social issue?</i>
Tuesday	8/31	Sociology's purpose and scope Read for Thursday: <i>Body Ritual Among the Nacirema</i> (#8, Miner)
Thursday	9/2	Culture and cultural foregrounding Read for Tuesday: <i>The Sounds of Silence</i> (#10, Hall and Hall) Response question #2 (due Tuesday): <i>How do new media foreground your quotidian experience; how does this foregrounding contrast with that of your parent(s) generation?</i>
Tuesday	9/7	The said and the unsaid Read for Thursday: <i>On Becoming Female</i> (#15, Eder) and <i>On Becoming Male</i> (#14, Henslin)
Thursday	9/9	Gender as a foregrounding force Read for Tuesday: <i>"But What Do You Mean?" Women and Men in Conversation</i> (#17, Tannen) Response question #3 (due Tuesday): <i>How does gender foreground your use of new media; how does this foregrounding contrast with that of other genders?</i>

Tuesday	9/14	The gender mystique Read for Thursday: Online handout on "Social Facts" (Durkheim)
Thursday	9/16	Durkheim, social facts and the concept of "sui generis." Read for Tuesday: Online handout on the origins of religion (Durkheim) and <i>India's Sacred Cow</i> (#40, Harris) Response question #4 (due Tuesday): <i>Based on your reading of Durkheim, in what sense might religion be understood as "reification"; what might be the implications of new media be for the future of religion?</i>
Tuesday	9/21	Making sense of the immaterial sui generis force Read for Thursday: Online handout on Marx
Thursday	9/23	Marx's theory of modernization Read for Tuesday: Online handout on alienation (Marx) Response question #5 (due Tuesday): <i>Based on your reading of Marx, what is alienation, why is (was) it part of modern capitalist society and to what extent does it exist (or not exist) in a post-modern society?</i>
Tuesday	9/28	Alienation past, present and future Read for Thursday: Online handout on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Weber)
Thursday	9/30	Culture, religion and capitalism Read for Tuesday: <i>Over the Counter at McDonald's</i> (#43, Leidner) and <i>Anybody's Son Will Do</i> (#42, Dyer) Response question #6 (due Tuesday): <i>Write an essay exploring the foregrounding connection between the rationalization of service and the rationalization of life.</i>
Tuesday	10/5	Logocentrism and the cultural ethos of rationality Read for Thursday: <i>Giving Birth the American Way</i> (#38, Davis-Floyd)
Thursday	10/7	Technology, rationality and human life Read for Tuesday: Online handout on <i>the self and the generalized other</i> (Mead) Response question #7 (due Tuesday): <i>Write an essay exploring the implications of new media for the "generalized other" and the process of developing a self identity.</i>

Tuesday	10/12	Play, the generalized other and the "mediated self" Read for Thursday: List of midterm essay exam questions
Thursday	10/14	Review for Midterm Exam
Tuesday	10/19	Fall Break
Thursday	10/21	Midterm Exam
Tuesday	10/26	Lecture on pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity Read for Thursday: Online handout on <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> #1 (Berger and Luckmann) Term paper is assigned
Thursday	10/28	The social construction of reality Read for Tuesday: Online handout on <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> #2 (Berger and Luckmann) Response question #8 (due Tuesday): <i>Write an essay exploring the implications of new media for the social construction of your reality. Make specific reference to the process of institutionalization and the 3 dialectical moments of society.</i>
Tuesday	11/2	The mediated construction of reality Read for Thursday: <i>Kindergarten as Academic Boot Camp</i> (#39, Gracey)
Thursday	11/4	Adjusted, anomic and autonomous selves Read for Tuesday: <i>The Pathology of Imprisonment</i> (#27, Zimbardo and <i>If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You?</i> (#23, Meyer) Response question # 9 (due Tuesday): <i>Write an essay exploring the effect of external social structures on your self identity and social roles; to what extent are you adjusted, anomic or autonomous in relation to key roles in your life?</i>
Tuesday	11/9	Reification, fear, autonomy and development Read for Thursday: <i>The Saints and the Roughnecks</i> (#26, Chambliss)
Thursday	11/11	Totality, infinity and the violence of the label Read for Tuesday: <i>Eating your Friends is the Hardest: The Survivors of the F-227</i> (#24, Henslin) Response question #10 (due Tuesday): <i>Write an essay exploring your emergent understanding of the context specificity of social reality.</i>

Tuesday	11/16	The social structural impact of contextual norms Read for Thursday: <i>Mark Twain on War and the Lunatic</i> (online handout) Phase I of term paper is due
Thursday	11/18	Rupturing binary logic Read for Tuesday: <i>Cultural Representation and the Problem of Ageism</i> (handout, McGowan) Response question #11 (due Tuesday): <i>Write an essay exploring your feelings and emergent understanding of the context specificity of social reality.</i>
Tuesday	11/23	Reflexivity
Thursday	11/25	Thanksgiving
Tuesday	11/30	Paper presentations and discussion Phase II of term paper is due
Thursday	12/2	Paper presentations and discussion
Tuesday	12/7	Review for final exam