

Introduction to Sociology (15 Soc 141-101)  
(Summer 2005; June 20-July 11; M-F 7:30-9:30 am; Rievschl 422B)

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Office Hours: M & F 9:30-10:30  
Exam Date: July 12: 7:30 to 9:30  
Holiday: July 4

Course materials:

*Introduction to Sociology*. Available for free online at:  
[http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction\\_to\\_Sociology](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology)

Glassner, Barry. 2000. *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things*. Basic Books.

Course content:

This course is designed to introduce you to the study of society. To do so we will examine theories about society and explore both large scale (macro) and small scale (micro) social settings and examples.

Due to the limited timeframe of the course (a total of 15 classes) we will not be able to cover every chapter in the textbook in minute detail. Instead, I have chosen to focus on aspects of society that I, personally, find very interesting, represent an array of the topics generally studied in sociology, and hopefully will be interesting to you.

Despite not covering the entire gamut of sociological inquiry, the class will cover a significant amount of information in a very short time. Because I think sociology should be interesting, especially at first exposure, I have included an additional text for the course, *The Culture of Fear*. This book touches on current issues in U.S. society. Because it was not requested ahead of time through the bookstore, you will not be required to have read any of it until the beginning of the second week of class (which should be sufficient time for you to have purchased a copy). We will be discussing the book at different points starting the second week of class. Also, the third project for everyone in the class is a review of the book (not a book report). More on this assignment below...

I also need to mention that I try to do pretty much everything I can electronically and avoid using paper whenever possible. I prefer that you turn in your research papers/projects electronically. Acceptable electronic formats include: OpenOffice Writer, WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF, or rich text format (.rtf). I will accept printed papers but will not accept hand-written papers! You will get a faster turn around on your papers if you turn them in electronically.

In an effort to integrate technology into the classroom, I will be using Blackboard for posting the syllabus, my lecture notes before class, the exam, and anything else that needs

to be posted. Whenever possible I will avoid handing out paper in class. I also encourage the use of the message board on Blackboard and will monitor the discussions to see if I can help answer any questions you have. It will probably be a good idea to check Blackboard before each class for my lecture notes and any other postings. If my notes are not posted before class, email me; I probably just forgot to post them.

Grades:

Assignment	Percentage	Date
Final	20%	07/12/05
Research Project 1	20%	June 29
Research Project 2	20%	July 6
Research Project 3	20%	July 11
Questions (2 required each class)	10%	
Participation/Attendance	10%	
Total	100%	

Notes on grades:

I'm not really 'out to get' anyone when it comes to grades; I am happy to work with people that need extra help. The attendance and participation percentage of your grade can be a pretty easy 10% - all you have to do is show up having read the assigned material for the day and participate in classroom discussions. If you are prepared with questions (another 10%), then participating by asking the questions you have brought shouldn't be a problem at all.

Daily Questions:

These can be as simple as asking me to clarify a concept from the reading or as complex as challenging something in the text. **Questions must be emailed to me the night before class to count for class the next day (11:59 pm is the official deadline).** This will give me a chance to prepare lecture material to address the questions.

Research Projects:

You will have to complete 3 research projects. Each research project should be 3 to 5 pages, double-spaced. Use a 12-point font and 1 inch side margins. If you go over, not a big deal (within reason). If you go under, I'll be more critical of the assignment. However, if you can say everything you need to say in less than 3 pages, you can still get full credit. To spread out the grading of these projects, they are due on specific dates (see calendar). **You cannot turn in all three on the last date.** You *must* turn in one project on or before each due date or you lose the points for that project.

The format these projects should take is that of a formal essay. The reason I stipulate that they are formal essays is because I do not want students taking liberties in their grammar, spelling, etc. Unlike other professors, I do grade on grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. because I believe it affects the clarity of thought. Poorly written papers with good ideas

are still poorly written papers and that will be reflected in the grade. PROOFREAD your papers. Perhaps during the course of the class I will post an example of a good paper on Blackboard to give others an idea of what it is I'm looking for.

You can choose any two of the projects below (numbers 1-4) for the first two assignments. **Everyone must do number 5 for the final assignment:**

1. Demographics. Basic demographics include statistics like: birth rates, death rates, and migration rates. But included under demographics are often things like social class, average age, level of education, etc. What are the demographics of your neighborhood, community, city, county? Compare them with another neighborhood, community, city, or county. Does this information surprise you? Does it not surprise you? How do you compare to the demographic trends in your area? (Hint: Use the census website to find this information - <http://www.census.gov/> )
2. Study human behavior. Go visit a very busy location (e.g., street festival, sporting event, concert, etc.) and see if you can discern any patterns to the activity. Your findings should be framed using the theories outlined in the chapters on collective behavior and social movements. Failure to include and address the theories in the text will reduce your grade dramatically.
3. Study religion. Choose a religious denomination and attend a service. Spend some time looking up the history and background of the religion. Now apply one of the theories from the chapter on religion to this particular denomination. Failure to include and address the theories in the text will reduce your grade dramatically.
4. Race, Gender, Class, Age. Take an example from your daily life illustrating how race, gender, class, or age *inequality* still exists (e.g., have you ever experienced or witnessed discrimination based on one of these characteristics). Examine your experience from a sociological perspective. What happened and why did/does it happen? What leads to the continuance of such practices? What can you do about it? What can society do about it? You should also draw upon the theories in the book where possible.
5. Read and review *Culture of Fear*. See blackboard for an example of a book review. This is not a book report where you tell me what the book said and whether or not you liked it. This is a critique of the book in which you briefly summarize the contents then criticize parts of the book. You should criticize the book at one of two or at both levels: internal criticisms – problems with the actual text of the book; external criticisms – problems with what the book included or excluded. If you have any questions about this project, see me.

#### Exam:

There is only one exam in this class, the final. It is comprehensive, but is not going to be particularly difficult. As you will notice in the grade breakdown, the final exam is only 20% of your grade, meaning you could not even take it and still get a B- in the course. I am of the opinion that exams are only good for telling the instructor what he/she has told the students to learn (and students tend to forget what they studied for the exam anyway...). As I'd rather make this class an enjoyable experience that introduces you to

the practicality of sociology, I've tried to de-emphasize the exam. Don't worry about it too much. Do the reading and come to class and you should pass without much difficulty (probably shouldn't even have to study much). Also, the exam will be online (using Blackboard), so you will *not* have to come to class on the 12<sup>th</sup>. However, because you need to be online to take it, it is recommended that you use a computer on campus. It is highly recommended that you do not try to take the exam on a dial-up internet connection; if your computer disconnects during the exam, you will lose all of your answers. Finally, because I cannot stop you from using your books during the exam, it will be timed. For every minute your exam remains open beyond the allotted time, you will lose 5 points (non-negotiable without extenuating circumstances – e.g., you have a learning disability; you'll need to come talk to me). Additionally, the exam will only be available from 6:00 am to 10:00 am on the day of the exam. If you miss the exam without talking to me **beforehand**, you will get 0 points on the exam.

#### Extra Credit:

There are two options for extra credit. The first option is fairly simple and can be done while doing the reading for the course. Because the textbook is being hosted on a wiki that is editable by everyone who uses it, everyone in this course will have the ability to contribute to the text by improving small mistakes I made when I wrote the text, fixing broken links, or even contributing to the text. Additionally, contributions to the sister projects of wikibooks.org (e.g., wikipedia.org) will count for extra credit as well. Rather than give points for every contribution students make, I've decided to reward the people who make the most contributions with the most points and break down the extra credit from there:

- the top 5 contributors get 5 extra credit points
- the next 5 get 4 points
- the next 5 get 3 points
- 1 for doing any
- 0 for not doing any

By extra credit points I mean actual points added to your final grade (e.g., your final grade is a 72% but you get 5 extra credit points, your final grade will become a 77%). In order for me to determine who gets the points, you will need to create an account on wikibooks (or wikipedia if you contribute there) and let me know what your username is. I will be able to see all of the changes made by a username and will add those up for the final tally. Let me repeat that so people understand how this will work: the only way to track how many contributions you make is if you sign in every time you make changes. If you don't sign in and make changes, they are done anonymously and I can't track those. If you want to participate in the extra credit, make sure you create an account and sign in. The determination of points will be made on contributions made during the course (from June 20<sup>th</sup> through July 11<sup>th</sup>).

The other option for extra credit isn't really extra credit but an alternative to the research projects/writing assignments. If you don't feel your writing ability is very strong, you can choose one of the four optional research projects and create a short documentary (cannot

be fiction) about the question you choose (e.g., demographics, religion, etc.). The film has to be edited and address the assignment. It also has to be at least 15 minutes in length. There is an increased risk in doing this option because your entire grade for the three assignments (60% of your total grade) will be determined by the quality of the film. But if you are not a strong writer, this may be a viable option for you. This assignment would be due on the last day of class (July 11<sup>th</sup>) and should be turned in to me either on a CD, DVD, or VHS tape. If you have some other way of sending me the video (online download), I'll accept that.

Course Schedule:

We have 15 classes. If you subtract 1 day for the first day of class, then we really only have 14 classes.

Date	Coursework
June 20	1 <sup>st</sup> day of class; cover syllabus, introduce wikibooks.org
June 21	Chapter 1 - Introduction
June 22	Chapter 2 - Sociological Methods
June 23	Chapter 3 – Sociological Theory
June 24	Chapter 4 - Society
June 27	Chapter 5 – Culture <i>The Culture of Fear – Introduction, Chapters 1 &amp; 2</i>
June 28	Chapter 6 - Socialization
June 29	Chapter 7 – Demographics <b>Research Project 1 due</b>
June 30	Chapter 8 – Stratification
July 1	Chapter 9 - Gender <i>The Culture of Fear – Chapters 3-6</i>
July 4	No Class!
July 5	Chapter 10 - Religion
July 6	Chapter 11 – Deviance <b>Research Project 2 due</b>
July 7	Chapter 12 - Family
July 8	Chapter 13 – Race and Ethnicity <i>The Culture of Fear – Chapters 7-9</i>
July 11	Chapters 16 & 17 - Collective Behavior and Social Movements <b>Research Project 3 due</b>
July 12	Take final on Blackboard.

### Course Policies

- Excused Absences – If you are absent for an exam, a make up will be offered only if (1) you contact me by phone, email, or in person before the exam or in the 24 hours immediately following the end of the exam period, and (2) you provide a written doctor's note stating that you were incapacitated and unable to attend the exam.
- Late papers – If you are unable to turn in a paper on time it will only be accepted if (1) you contact me by phone, email, or in person before the due date, and (2) you provide a written doctor's note stating that you were incapacitated and unable to turn in the paper. As noted above, I prefer electronic copies of papers. If you do print out a paper copy you should **not** put it in a mailbox, under a door, etc. **without** express permission. If you do this without permission and the paper is misplaced, you will **not** receive credit.
- Cheating and plagiarism – As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writing, etc. which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own. If you want to quote someone else, reference or cite them. If you plagiarize you will receive no credit and it will be reported.
- Students with disabilities – Please see the course instructor at the beginning of the quarter to discuss any special needs you have.
- Exam material will come from the textbook and the in-class discussions and lecture materials. If it is in any of these sources it is fair game for a test question.

DISCLAIMER: I reserve the right to modify this syllabus as conditions warrant.