

Sociology 101
Spring 2016
TTh 3:35-4:40

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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

It is sometimes charged that sociology, the science of group behavior, is in actuality the science of the obvious. Sociologists, it is said, spend a lot of effort and money to “discover” what everyone already knows. This unfortunate misconception is hard to shake because, as social beings, we have all already developed an intimate, intuitive understanding of how society works. Yet, it is exactly because of this presumed familiarity with the subject matter of sociology that one must be extremely careful when speaking about matters sociological. So-called “common sense” assumptions about society may not be—indeed, they often are not!—true upon careful scrutiny.

This course fulfills SAS core curriculum learning goals. It aims to provide students with the appropriate tools and critical perspective to better discern fundamental attributes and patterns of social life in the 21st century. We will examine some of the major approaches to the study of society and apply them to a wide variety of social phenomena across space and time: from face-to-face interactions to digital relationships, from family life to life in the city, from the American experience to the global landscape. This course is thus designed to offer you a first taste of sociological theory and research—but also, and more importantly, a deeper understanding and a fuller appreciation of the complexities of the world around you and your place in it.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Readings

We will be using the following required textbook, available at the University Bookstore or any online bookseller:

- *Sociology* (10th Edition), by Rodney Stark

All other reading material will be posted on the course's website on Sakai.

Class Format and Participation

Lecture time will be equally devoted to a close analysis of the assigned reading(s) and a broader examination of key sociological themes and issues, as they pertain to that day's topic of discussion. You are expected to read the assigned material **PRIOR** to our class meeting, and come prepared to discuss, question, debate, and generally contribute to the overall class experience. To that end, I will be posting lecture outlines on Sakai before class meets. Still, while lectures will provide the primary structure for this course, the large class size means it is during recitation sessions that you will have the most opportunity to truly interact with the material. Be forewarned, then, that it will be difficult to do well in the course if you do not regularly attend lectures and recitation. In case you do need to miss a session, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with one of your classmates to get lecture/recitation notes

E-mail Guidelines

I will happily reply to all student email, and I encourage you to get in touch with either me or one of the course's teaching assistants, Brooklynn Hitchens and Tsai-Yen Han, to discuss any issues that may arise that are not directly addressed in the syllabus or the course's site on Sakai. However, be sure to: (a) put "Soc 101" in the subject line; and (b) include your full name somewhere in the body of your message. Otherwise, you run the risk that I will take your email as spam and delete it without reading it.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

- Your grade for this course will be based on **THREE** closed-books, closed-notes exams, each worth 30 points, or 30% of your final grade. Exams will be non-cumulative and consist of multiple choice questions, true/false statements, and one blue book essay. You will be evaluated based on your ability to effectively answer questions by drawing from readings, lectures, and class/recitation discussion. Make-up exams will only be granted under extraordinary and appropriately documented circumstances, and they will consist of short-answer and essay questions.
- The last 10% of your final grade will be based on your recitation attendance and participation.
- Final grades are absolutely non-negotiable and will be assigned according to the following scale:
A = 90-100; B+ = 85-89; B = 80-84; C+ = 75-79; C = 70-74; D = 60-69; F ≤ 59

- Cheating, plagiarism, or any other kind of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will result in a failing grade and a referral to the Dean of Students. The University Policy on Academic Integrity is at http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/
- Just as your grade depends on your adhering to certain basic rules of academic integrity, so, too, will it depend on your adhering to certain fundamentals of appropriate classroom behavior, as follows:

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted, and encouraged.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.

CLASS SCHEDULE*

*This schedule is subject to change. Changes, if necessary, will be announced well in advance during class and on the course website on Sakai.

January 19

Introductions

Reading (optional): C. Wright Mills, "The Promise of Sociology," on Sakai

SOCIOLOGY, THE SCIENCE OF SOCIETY

January 21

Thinking Sociologically

Readings: 1. Peter L. Berger, "Invitation to Sociology," on Sakai
2. Stark, p. 1-9

A TASTE OF OTHER AREAS OF SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

April 12 **Sociology of the Family**
Reading: Stark, Chapter 13

April 14 **Medical Sociology**
Reading: Peter Conrad, excerpts from *The Medicalization of Society*, on Sakai

April 19 **Sociology of Technology**
Reading: New York Times article, “Wearable Computing,” on Sakai

April 21 **Environmental Sociology**
Reading: Stella Čapek, “The Social Construction of Nature,” on Sakai

April 26 **Social Movements and Social Change**
Reading: Stark, Chapter 21

April 28 [Catch-up and Review Session]

May 6 **– FINAL EXAM –**
12:00-3:00PM