

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

01:920:101:04

SPRING 2013

TUE/THU 7:40 – 9:00 PM

SCOTT HALL 135, COLLEGE AVENUE CAMPUS

Instructor: Vikash Singh

Office Hours: Thu 5:00 pm –7:00 pm, Room 101 at 132 George Street, Douglas Campus, New Brunswick. (Alternate days and times will be available by appointment).

Email: vsingh@sociology.rutgers.edu . Please put Sociology 101 as a subject heading and make sure you have your full name in the e-mail message.

## **Course description:**

This course offers an introduction to the discipline of sociology through an overview of various sociological topics, approaches, and methods. Focused on a systematic study of social life, the discipline of sociology offers distinctive concepts and methods to understand human beings and the societies they inhabit. The primary operating principle of sociology is to shift analytic emphasis from individual characteristics –as we are wont to do in common thinking –to the characteristics of broader social groups and institutions. Thus, from a sociological perspective, (our perceptions of) individual characteristics are inalienable from the character of social and historical institutions, such as the state, economy, religion, family, schooling, popular culture, and the media. In contrast to, say, psychology, which analyzes individual characteristics, the sociologist is primarily interested either in the characteristics of social institutions, or in the interactions among individuals and/or institutions. In sociological parlance, we focus on *collective representations*, which, according to the legendary French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, are in a class of their own autonomous of the qualities of the people involved.

Such focus on collective characteristics provides sociology a unique orientation and ability to analyze the consequences of social institutions. Thus, for example, it expects us to see life outcomes for different human beings as consequences of social differences perpetuated by broader distinctions, such as gender, race, class background, and nationality, instead of any “innate individual qualities.” We accordingly realize that social institutions systematically place individuals in positions of relative privilege or disadvantage, based on such indicators as class, gender, race, or caste. The course will offer students basic concepts and training to critically analyze societies, and the social positions of various actors and institutions.

We begin with a few cases meant to depict the distinctiveness of the sociological approach, its focus on the role of social forces in individual life outcomes, and the importance of history/time for the discipline. Following that we move on to an analysis of modern societies from a historical

perspective. Thereafter, we consider specific factors that are constitutive of power and social stratification in contemporary societies, particularly, class, gender, and race. Next, we move on to studying sociological methods, followed by themes of power, culture, socialization, media, and social change. By the end of the course, you should be able to demonstrate a sound intuitive understanding of the basic principles of the field, and should be able to analyze and comment on everyday social and cultural phenomena, with a basic level of sociological expertise.

The course fulfills the following learning requirements of the School of Arts and Sciences:

- a. Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world. Introduce students to the "sociological imagination," a distinctive analysis of the ways people think, feel, and behave that focuses on how they are situated in historically, culturally, and socially specific environments.
- b. Assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis. The process and techniques of social research are studied: conceptualization, measurement, data collection and analysis in qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- c. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization. Competing views of the social world embedded in different sets of theories are compared and contrasted. Of particular interest are situations in which different theories predict different outcomes.
- d. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations. Sociological theory and research is used to explore world problems and social issues: racial conflict, class conflict, and gendered exploitation.

**Required Texts:** The following textbook available at Rutgers Barnes and Noble bookstore on Somerset Street is required:

Ferguson, Susan J. 2010. *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*. Sixth Edition. McGraw Hill ISBN- 9780073528212.

All other readings will be available on the SAKAI site under "resources." Most of the readings are also available in the Fifth Edition of the textbook, which may be available much cheaper on the internet. While page numbers in the syllabus follow the Sixth Edition, readings not there in the previous edition, can be found in SAKAI.

**Evaluation:**

Course grade will be calculated based on three in-class examinations, attendance, and memos or class participation.

Mid-Term Exam I: 25%

Mid-Term Exam II: 25%

Final Exam: 35%

Attendance: 10%

Analytical memo/ participation: 5%

**Exams:**

The exams will be based both on readings and extra material that may be discussed in class. In most cases, I will post power-point slides on SAKAI; however, please make a habit of keeping notes. The exams will not be cumulative.

**Attendance & Memos:**

*Attendance:* Attendance in class is required. I will not take attendance the first two classes. Of the remaining, you will not be penalized for missing two classes. For every extra class you miss thereafter without valid and sufficient reason, you will lose 0.5% of your overall course grade up to a maximum of 10 percent. If you have to miss class for a medical or family emergency, you should send me an email with your full name and “Introduction to Sociology,” in your text or title, within a week.

*Analytical memo/ Participation:* We will be watching about four movies in class. A two page memo each is required on two of these movies (i.e., a total of four pages). This will be due in SAKAI Assignments by midnight 30<sup>th</sup> of April. However, students who actively, and in an informed manner, participate in class will be excused from this requirement. A student should have participated substantively in at least seven classes to be awarded this part of the grade. This is meant to reward and encourage constructive participation, which facilitates exchange of ideas, and helps construct a good, interactive learning atmosphere. Please confirm with me at least a week before (i.e., by April 23) if you believe you have (or would have) participated sufficiently to be excused the memo. The movies will usually remain on reserve in the Douglas media lab till a week after they are shown in class.

**Students with disabilities:**

If you need disability based accommodations for exams or other course requirements, please bring an “accommodation letter” from the Office of Disability Services. The Office arranges for special exams and proctors. If you need any other accommodation, please talk to me individually. The Office is at:

Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus  
54 Joyce Kilmer Ave., Suite A145  
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045

**Classroom Atmosphere:**

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. Students and instructors have to act with mutual respect and

common courtesy. Distractive behavior such as cell phone use, internet surfing, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning without permission etc. is not acceptable. Courteous expression of intellectual disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, encouraged.

The University Code of Student Conduct allows the instructor to direct any student engaging in disruptive behavior 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://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/files/documents/UCSCJuly2011.pdf>

**Academic integrity:**

The course will be conducted in full compliance of the university's policy on academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) quoting or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, submitting the same work, or major portions of work, for more than one course without the permission of the instructor, presenting other's work as one's own and so forth. Any incidences of such violations will be seriously treated and reported to judicial affairs. The university's academic integrity policy may be found at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_9\\_01\\_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf)

**IMPORTANT NOTE: You are expected to come prepared for class, having studied all material AHEAD OF the class meetings.**

## Reading Schedule

**The Sociological Perspective I**

01/22            Syllabus day.

01/24            Mills, C. Wright. "The Promise." (Textbook, pp.1-6)  
Wright, Erik Olin (2011). "Real Utopias." *Contexts*, 10, 2, 36-42. (SAKAI)

**The Sociological Perspective II**

01/29            Gaines, Donna. "Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead-End Kids." (Textbook, pp. 7-19).  
Horowitz, Allan, and Jerome Wakefield. 2006. "The Epidemic in Mental Illness: Clinical Fact or Survey Artifact?" *Contexts*, 5, 1, 19-23. (SAKAI).

- 01/31 Romero, Mary. "An Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey."  
(Textbook, pp. 19-32)  
Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. (Textbook, pp. 495-505).

### **Society and its Transformations**

- 02/05 Marx, Karl, and Fredrik Engels. Manifesto of the Communist Party. (Textbook, pp. 468-473).
- 02/07 Movie: Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*

### **Modernity and the Individual**

- 02/12 Marx, Karl. 1844. Estranged Labor. (SAKAI)  
Hochschild, Arlie. "The Time Bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work." (Textbook, pp. 489-498).
- 02/14 Schoon, Eric, and Cindy L. Cain. 2011. "Facebook's Boundaries." *Contexts*, 10, 2, 70-72.  
Kurzman, Charles. 2002. "Bin Laden and Other Thoroughly Modern Muslims." *Contexts*, 1, 4, 13-20.
- 02/19 Questions, Discussion, and Review.
- 02/21 EXAM ONE<sup>1</sup>

### **Power and Politics**

- 02/26 Domhoff, William G. "Who Rules America: The Corporate Community and the Upper Class." (Textbook, pp. 257-269).  
Scanlan, Stephen J., Craig Jenkins, and Lindsey Peterson. 2010. "The Scarcity Fallacy." *Contexts*, 9, 1, 34-39.
- 02/28 Movie, *The Corporation*.

### **Gendered Relations**

- 03/05 Risman, Barbara. "Gender as Structure." (Textbook, pp. 295-304).

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<sup>1</sup> With prior permission, and only in cases of emergency, make-up exam will be given on Friday, February 22 from 5:00-7:00 pm in Davison Hall 122 (26 Nichol Ave, New Brunswick).

Rigney, Debra. 2011. "Boys vs. Girls." *Contexts*, Vol.10, No.4, pp.78-79.  
Harkness, Geoff, and Samira Islam. 2011. "Muslim Female Athletes and the Hijab." *Contexts*, Vol.10, No.4, pp.64-65. (SAKAI).

03/07 Movie: TBD

03/12 Park, Sangyoub. 2011. "A 21st Century Gender Revolution." *Contexts*. 10, 1, 58-59.  
Charles, Maria. 2011. "What Gender is Science?" *Contexts*. 10, 2, 22-28.  
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Death Without Weeping" (On SAKAI).

SPRING BREAK!

### **Racialized Inequalities**

03/26 Schudson, Michael. Telling Stories about Rosa Parks. *Contexts*, Vol. 11, No.3, pp.22-27.  
Farley, Reynolds. "The Waning of American Apartheid?" *Contexts*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp.33-43. (SAKAI).

03/28 Documentary film: Tulia, Texas – [*The war on drugs and the persistence of racism in the United States*].

04/02 Wilson, William. "Jobless ghettos: The social implications of the disappearance of work in segregated neighborhoods" (SAKAI)  
Anderson, Elijah. 1994. "The Code of the Streets." (SAKAI)  
Rios, Victor M. 2012. "Stealing a Bag of Potato Chips and Other Crimes of Resistance." *Contexts*, Vol.11, No. 1, pp.48-53. (SAKAI).

04/07 Questions, Discussion, and Review.

04/09 EXAM TWO<sup>2</sup>

### **Social Research Methods**

04/14 Schwalbe, Michael. "Finding out how the social world works" (Textbook, pp. 33-42)  
Duneier, Mitchell. "Sidewalk" (Textbook, pp. 53-60).

04/16 Schuman, Howard. 2002. "Sense and Nonsense about Surveys." *Contexts*, 1, 2, 40-47. (SAKAI).

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<sup>2</sup> With prior permission, and only in cases of emergency, make-up exam will be given on Friday, April 26 from 5:00-7:00 pm in Davison Hall 122 (26 Nichol Ave, New Brunswick).

Lidner, Andrew M. 2012. "An Old Tool with New Promise." *Contexts*, 11, 1, 70-72. (SAKAI).

### **Culture**

04/21 Glassner, Barry. "The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things." Textbook, pp. 61-68.

Trask, Haunani Kay. 2012. "Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture." Textbook, pp. 88-95.

04/23 Mantsios, Gregory. Media Magic: Making Class Invisible – How the Mass Media Distorts Social Class (Textbook, pp. 433-440)  
Movie TBD

### **Socialization & Social Change**

04/28 Granfield, Robert. "Making It By Faking It: Working-Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment" (Textbook, pp. 123-134).

Dog, Mary Crow and Erdoes, Richard, "Civilize Them With a Stick –education as an institution of social control" (Textbook, pp. 561-567).

04/30 Harper, Charles and Kevin Leicht. "American social trends" (Textbook, pp. 627-640)  
Tarrow, Sidney. 2011 (Oct 10). "Why Occupy Wall Street is Not the Tea Party of the Left." *Foreign Affairs*. (SAKAI).

Stoecker, Randy. 2009. Community Organizing and Social Change. *Contexts*, Vol.8, No.1, pp.20-25. (SAKAI).

Wright, Erik Olin (2011). "Real Utopias." *Contexts*, 10, 2, 36-42. (SAKAI) [Once More]

05/02 Questions, Discussion, Review

**Final Exam    May 14, 8:00 PM –11:00 PM<sup>3</sup>**  
**In our classroom, Scott Hall 135.**

**Good luck!**  
**Enjoy your vacation!**

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<sup>3</sup> Final exam schedules are available at <https://finalexams.rutgers.edu>