

ROBERT GOLDSTEIN
INTRO TO SOCIOLOGY
FALL 2005
R7Goldstein@msn.com

OFFICE HOURS: TTH, 10:45-11:45
McGuinn Hall, Rm. 410

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course surveys the major perspectives, debates, and findings within "classical" and modern sociology, using them as tools with which to understand the institutionalized system in which we live. The course begins with an overview of the field, covering its basic principles and methods. It then explores the relation between culture and society, social structure and the individual, with an emphasis on the nature of groups and formal organizations, deviance, sexuality, social classes, gender, race, and ethnicity, economy, work, socialization, culture, and social interaction. This course is designed so that I can share with you my excitement about sociology. I love what I do, and I hope to get across some of that passion. My goal in this course is to get you excited about sociology, while facilitating enough learning that you will have the intellectual tools required to move on to higher level courses. In other words, I am trying to draw you into the "pleasures of sociology."

We will examine the world of human behaviors, and as such, step into the discipline of sociology. The required readings explore many aspects of social life, allowing you to connect your own biographies to the structures of society. Additionally, the course incorporates the following concerns:

1. **PERENNIAL QUESTIONS:** We begin our sociological journey by addressing a host of complex, challenging questions, which were, in fact, on the minds of such classical social theorists as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. What is the "glue" that holds society together? How is social order achieved? What is the nature and role of social conflict in society? Does the individual define society or does society define the individual? And finally, concerning a more modern nagging debate: Is our behavior mostly influenced by "nature or "nurture?"
2. **CULTURAL DIVERSITY:** The 21st century clearly reminds us that we are living in a culturally diverse society. Just take a walk down Boston's fashionable Newbury Street, and meet people from a variety of ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural backgrounds. A portion of the readings will focus on various multicultural perspectives.
3. **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:** The sociohistorical component of the course will help us to gain insight into the social changes that have occurred since the writings of "classical "soil" theorists as Marx, Weber and Durkheim. In particular, the social transformations, resulting from the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century will be explored. By examining the past, I believe, we gain a more sociological appreciation of the present. One could argue, furthermore, that human beings are both "subjects" and "objects" of history.

In Invitation to sociology, the sociologist Peter Berger put this idea in the following way:

"It is quite correct to say that society is objective fact, coercing and even creating us. But it is also correct to say that our meaningful acts help to support the edifice of society and may on occasion help to change it. Indeed, the two statements contain between them the paradox of social existence: That society defines us, but is in turn defined by us."

4. **METHODOLOGY:** One of the major on-going concerns in sociology centers on the connection between research methods (e.g., participant observation, in-depth interviews, statistical analyses) and theoretical perspectives (e.g., conflict, functionalism, symbolic interactionism). As such, the required readings will, in fact, be addressing this essential linkage.
5. **WRITING COMPONENT:** Exams will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your sociological awareness. Also, the written requirements for the presentations as well as the optional extra credit papers.
6. **PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY:** Your own biography (childhood to present) will, undoubtedly, play a major role in how you formulate your own standpoint concerning important sociological issues (e.g., race, class, gender, inequalities, theory, relationships, careers, family, and so on). Many of the topics addressed throughout this course may actually stimulate your sensitive self, but hopefully what I view as a type of consciousness-raising class, will help you to construct your own sociological philosophy about society as well as yourself.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Macionis, Sociology

Karp, Speaking of Sadness

Anderson, Code of the Street

GRADING: Evaluation of the student's work for this class will be based upon a mid-term exam, final exam, and a group presentation.

1. **MID-TERM EXAM:** This includes the readings and lectures. Refer to the **Schedule** section of the syllabus. This exam represents 1/3 of the final.
2. **GROUP PRESENTATION:** Each member of the group must participate in the oral report, and all students in a group receive an individual grade. Consider this a whole-class assignment-the success of which depends not just upon the collaborative efforts of the presenters, but also upon the willingness of the audience to listen and participate. Narrow the topic to something you believe will be informative and interesting to the rest of the class. Prepare an annotated bibliography (minimum of 10 resources, 2 may come from the internet) and an outline of your presentation. On the day the report is due, each group member must submit to me 1. an annotated bibliography, books/scholarly journal articles, and 2. the outline.

Introduce yourselves to the rest of the class. By introducing yourselves at the beginning of your presentation you can make the presentation more personal and create an atmosphere that is conducive to audience participation. Grading criteria: 1) substance or content, 2) creativity and resourcefulness (use of materials, exercises, and activities), and 3) form and style (articulation, length, organization, and preparedness). Your presentation constitutes 1/3 of the final grade.

3. **FINAL EXAM:** This represents 1/3 of the final grade.

SOME EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE:

- You are expected to arrive to class before the class begins. If you get into a pattern of arriving late I will ask you to change your pattern or drop the class if arriving on time is not possible for you.
- Each week's lectures and class activities will be based on material from the readings. You are expected to have read the week's readings, to attend classes on time, and to offer your questions and insights during class.
- I will be available during my office hours unless circumstances arise that prevent that. If you need to see me but are not able to do so during my scheduled office hours we can arrange to meet another time during the week.
- Attendance is mandatory and required in this course. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester. Students missing 3 or more classes will be penalized (final grade will be lowered by 1/2 grade, in other words, a B turns into a B-). The only expectations are for students who have a LEGITIMATE reason for not being present. The bottom line is that the attendance policy is very strict.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in an adult and professional manner. Students are obligated to respect classroom rules (for example, absolutely no talking while attendance is being taken) and etiquette. Students are expected to participate in class discussion and stay focused on the lectures. Sleeping, talking, reading non-course materials and any other juvenile behavior will NOT be tolerated. Also, no cell phones or beepers.
- Think of the syllabus as a contract between professor and student. The terms outlined in this syllabus are binding for both the student and the professor.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK OF

TOPICS/EXAMS

READINGS

9/5 and
9/12

Sociological Perspective,
Research

Chapters 1,2

Karp,chs.1-3

9/19 and 9/26	Culture, Society	Chapters 3,4 Karp, ch.4-7
10/3 and 10/10	Socialization, Social Interaction	Chapters 5,6
10/17	<u>MID-TERM EXAM</u> , Groups and Organizations	Chapter 7
10/24,10/31	Deviance, Sexuality	Chapters 8,9 Anderson,9-66
11/7,11/14	Social Stratification, Social Class	Chapters 10,11 Anderson,67-179
11/21,11/28	Gender, Race and Ethnicity	Chapters,13,14. Anderson,180-326
12/5	Family	Chapter 18

FINAL EXAM, TBA

NOTES: Group presentation dates will be finalized during the beginning of the course.

Extra credit papers will be allowed. You can choose your own topic...I will help you to focus on a specific topic. This paper should be 12-15 pages, double-spaced, and a 12 font. Also, a minimum of 12 scholarly resources are required. If your paper is worth at least a B+, your final grade will be increased by 1/2 grade (for example, A- becomes an A). **DUE** the week of 11/28.

If you miss an exam you must have proof that your failure to meet the scheduled exam was due to legitimate circumstances. In those cases a make-up exam will be given. You **MUST** make-up the exam within **ONE WEEK**.