

SC001-01 --- Introductory Sociology

Spring 2006 - Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.; McGuinn 531

Ritchie Lowry

Nature of This Class: This is a special seminar-like introductory class, not the usual large lecture. You should not take this course if you have already taken an Introductory Sociology course (SC001). The class is held to low enrollment to facilitate discussion and interaction, and it will focus upon the development of research and writing skills dealing with the application of social theory to social issues leading to policy implications.

Overall Course Content & Requirements: Within the discipline of Sociology, there are two general perspectives — micro and macro. Micro-sociological perspectives focus upon human interaction and relationships in everyday life, while macro-sociological perspectives look at long-term historical social and cultural trends and processes. Both perspectives are necessary to understand the nature of human society and the human condition. Sociology is also both humanistic and scientific. We will begin the semester by talking about the history and nature of Sociology as a discipline - what sociologists look at and why. We will then spend the first part of the semester reading Charon and Howard. In addition, you will be receiving frequent class handouts that summarize sociological research and theories. The major requirement of the course will be 3 sequential papers (approximately 10 pages each) dealing with an important problem, theory, concept or issue using a sociological perspective. The first paper should identify and discuss the issue-theory-problem-etc. The second paper should analyze it, and the third paper should develop a conclusion. This will allow all class participants to develop their own resource list (not just books and papers, but also perhaps off the World Wide Web and Internet) and deal with something of, hopefully, lasting personal interest from a sociological perspective. Early in the semester, you will be asked to describe for the class your research project for the semester, (see Examples below). After the completion of the first and second papers, you will be asked to present your findings to the class. Therefore, participation in class discussions will be a very important aspect of this course, and you should let us know if you must miss a class for some reason. Attendance will be taken at certain times.

Required & Shared Reading:

Joel Charon, Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective (Wadsworth, paper).

Eve L. Howard, Classic Readings in Sociology (Wadsworth, paper)

Office Hours:

Monday, 1:00 to 2:00 pm. and Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., or by arrangement in 422 McGuinn (X23346).

Important Dates:

Monday, January 16th - Holiday; No Class

Wednesday, January 18th – Introduction to course.

Monday, January 23rd - What is Sociology? What do Sociologists study? Why?

Wednesday, January 25th – Tentative Title & Description of Term Project Due

Monday, January 30th & Wednesday, February 1st – The Sociological Method

Monday, February 6th & Wednesday, February 8th – Popular Myths, Social Scientific

Paradigms & Paradigm Revolutions

Monday, February 13th & Wednesday, February 15th – Deviance Paradigm

Monday, February 20th – First Paper Due; Deviance Paradigm: Examples of Research

Wednesday, February 22nd – Deviance Paradigm: Examples of Research

Monday, February 27th – Report on First Paper in Class; Labeling Theory

Wednesday, March 1st – Labeling Theory

Monday, March 6th and Wednesday, March 8th – No Classes; Spring Vacation

Monday, March 13th & Wednesday, March 15th - Disorganization Paradigm

Monday, March 20th & Wednesday, March 22nd– Disorganization Paradigm: Examples

of Research

Monday, March 27th & Wednesday, March 29th – Conflict Theory

Monday, April 3rd & Wednesday, April 5th – Functional Paradigm

Wednesday, April 10th & Wednesday, April 12th – Second Paper(s) due; Functionalism:

Examples of Research

Monday, April 17th– No Class; Easter Vacation & Patriots Day

Wednesday, April 19th –Report on Second Paper in Class

Monday, April 24th & Wednesday, April 26th – Additional Macro-sociological

Perspectives

Monday, May 1st & Wednesday, May 3rd - Additional Macro-sociological Perspectives

& Last Classes

Friday, May 5th through Monday, May 8th – Study Days

Thursday, May 11th – Final Paper(s) due

Examples of Past & Possible Term Projects:

Abortion versus Adoption

Animal Rights Movement (history, organization, goals, and accomplishments)

Capital Punishment (prevention or retribution?)

Gay and Lesbian Status (treatment by society and consequences)

Genetic Engineering (social and cultural issues)

Gun Ownership and Violence (is there a correlation and why?)

Marijuana Prohibition: Is It Working

Racial Stereotypes and Prejudice (Black/White, Arab American, Asian, etc.)

Sexism and Racism in Advertising (content analysis and implications)

Study of Body Piercing (what is its meaning?)

The Tattoo Community

University Athletics (historical changes and implications)

War and the Role of the Media (propaganda, news reports, etc.)

Readings in Charon & Howard (subject to some change)

Wednesday, January 18th – Howard #1 & #2; Charon #2 & #3
Wednesday, January 5th – Howard #4 & #6; Charon #1
Monday, January 30th – Charon #5
Monday, February 6th – Charon #6 & #10
Monday, February 20th – Howard #7, #8, #10 & #12; Charon #9
Monday, March 30th – Howard #3
Monday, March 27th – Howard #5 & #9; Charon #4
Wednesday, April 19th – Howard #11, #13, #14 & #15; Charon #7 & #8

You can read these selections in any order that you desire but be prepared to discuss them in the following several classes after the dates indicated above. They will also help you select and design a term project.

Grading of Term Projects:

The term projects will be graded on three things:

- (1) The way in which concepts and theories from the class and shared readings can be used to analyze the problem/issue you have selected to study.
- (2) The quality and originality of your paper(s).
- (3) The relevance of the issues discussed to sociological research and theory and the implications for social policy.

Staying in Touch: If you want to send Ritchie Lowry e-mail - GOODMONEY1@aol.com with a copy to lowry@bc.edu. If you have access to the World Wide Web, check out Professor Lowry's Home Page for Socially Concerned Investors, Consumers and Businesspeople - <http://www.goodmoney.com/> He also has a Personal Web Page through the B.C. server @ <http://www2.bc.edu/~lowry>