

SC 00107 Introduction to Sociology

Fall 2006

T Th 4:30pm

Instructor: Johanna Pabst

E-mail: pabstjo@bc.edu

Office: McGuinn 410D

Office Hours:

Course Objectives

This course is intended to survey the major perspectives, debates, and topics within classical and contemporary sociology, as well as to spark your interest in thinking about your place as a member of society. We'll start off with some of the building blocks of sociology, working to understand what it means to adopt the "sociological imagination." After an overview of social research methods, we'll then move on to applying the sociological imagination to culture, socialization, social institutions, and social inequality.

The three main goals of this course are: 1) to develop and use a sociological imagination, 2) to achieve an understanding of basic sociological concepts and issue; and 3) to strengthen critical thinking and analytical skills by reading and writing critically and integrating ideas and concepts from the course material and your own lives.

I also hope to get you excited about sociology! Even if you are not planning on a sociology major, this course can offer you a new way of looking at the world around you and to question popular, "common sense" assumptions about the world. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to provoke thought about what we take for granted as "natural" about the social order of everyday life, in order that we may think more critically about the ways our own social interactions both reinforce and challenge the cultural practices and social institutions which shape those very interactions.

As this is a core course, we will be looking at sociology with an eye towards the following concerns:

- 1) **The Perennial Questions** : We'll think about the questions that great social thinkers like Marx and Weber asked years ago. How is society possible? What is the relationship of the individual to society and vice-versa? How do these questions shape contemporary debates and can there be any resolution? Is our behavior more "nature" or "nurture"?
- 2) **Cultural Diversity**: A number of readings will address the issue of cultural diversity in 21st century society, in order to appreciate the great variety of ethnic, religious, racial and cultural perspectives.

- 3) **Historical Perspective:** We'll regard sociology and sociological theory within the historical context in which they are embedded. We will also address specific events and social phenomena as manifestations of larger sociohistorical trends.
- 4) **Methodology:** A section of this course will be devoted to understanding different methods sociologists use to study various social phenomena.
- 5) **Writing Component:** There is a strong writing requirement in this course. You'll be expected to integrate and apply the concepts learned in class to real world issues and your own life. We'll work to understand what strong sociological writing and critical thinking can accomplish.
- 6) **Creating a Personal Philosophy:** You're encouraged to think about your own life and biography in terms of the topics addressed in class. You'll be challenged to critically examine your own position in our society, to assess your behavior, and to raise your consciousness as a member of society.

Course Requirements

- 1) Class Attendance and Participation: Everyone is expected to attend class and participate in discussions and exercises.
- 2) Assigned Reading: You should come to class having read all assigned material.
- 3) Pop Quizzes: Quizzes will be given to encourage you to come prepared.
- 4) Papers: There will be 3 paper assignments throughout the semester. These will be an opportunity for you to critically connect concepts introduced in class with topics of interest to you. More detailed assignments will be given out.
- 5) There will be a final in-class exam which will cover the core material of the course.

Grading

Your grade will be based on the following elements:

- 1) Class Attendance and Participation – 10%
- 2) Five Pop Quizzes – 10%
- 3) Paper 1: 3 page paper – 10%
- 4) Papers 2 and 3: 5-6 page papers – 20% each
- 5) Final Exam – 30%

Academic Honesty

You are responsible for adhering to the statement of academic honesty in your Student Handbook.

Disability Statement

If you have a disability, please let me know about it at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Keeping in Touch with Me

I encourage you to drop by during my office hours if you have any questions about the readings, assignments, or concepts in general. I can also make appointments outside of these hours if you check with me. The best way to contact me is through my email listed at the beginning of the syllabus. I check my email frequently and will get back to you as soon as possible.

Required Readings

- Kendall, Diana. *Sociology in our Times*, 5th edition, Thomson Wadsworth. 2005.
- Cargan, Leonard, and Jeanne H. Ballantine. *Sociological Footprints: Introductory Readings in Sociology*, 10th edition, Thomson Wadsworth. 2006.
- Ritzer, George. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Pine Forge Press. 2000.
- Online Course Reserves and handouts

Course Schedule

PART I. STUDYING SOCIAL LIFE AND SOCIETY

Week 1: Introductions

Sept 5 **Introductions**

Sept 7 **The Sociological Imagination**

- Kendall, Chapter 1: p. 1-10
- C&G- C. Wright Mills, “The Promise,” from *The Sociological Imagination*, 1959: p. 29-34
- C&G- Earl Babbie, “An Idea Whose Time Has Come,” 1994: p. 7-11
- Peter L. Berger, Excerpt from *An Invitation to Sociology*, 1963*

Week 2-3: Sociological Perspectives

Sept 12 **Core Thinkers/Perspectives in Sociology**

- Kendall, Chapter 1: p. 10-21
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” *
- Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” *

Sept 14 **Core Thinkers/ Perspectives**

- Kendall, Chapter 1: p. 21-32
- Donna Gaines, “Teenage Wasteland”

Sept 19 **Research Methods (an Overview)**

- Kendall, Chapter 2: Sociological Research Methods

- Craig Haney, W. Curtis Banks and Philip G. Zimbardo, “Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison” *
- Joel Best, “Contentious Numbers,” from *More Damned Lies and Statistics*, 2004: p. 144-169 *

Week 3-4: Culture and Socialization

Sept 21 Culture, Subculture, and Consumer Culture

- Kendall, Chapter 3: Culture, p. 79-88, 95-96
- Robert Bellah et al., “The Pursuit of Happiness,” from *Habits of the Heart*, 1985: p. 3-26*
- Kalle Lasn, “Culture Jamming,” 1999*
- (Some sort of subculture reading)

Sept 26 Socialization

- Kendall, Chapter 4: Socialization, p. 112-130
- George Herbert Mead, “The Self” from *Mind, Self and Society*, 1934 *
- C&G- “Key Facts on TV Violence,” 2003: p. 71-75
- C&G- William Pollack, “Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood,” 1998: p.76-80
- C&G- Gwynne Dyer, “Anybody’s Son Will Do,” 1985: p. 91-98

Paper 1 Due

PART II: SOCIAL GROUPS AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Week 4 -5: Social Structure

Sept 28 Society, Social Structure and Interaction – Micro

- Kendall, Chapter 5: p. 155-167
- Erving Goffman, “The Presentation of Self” from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959
- C&G- Peter M. Blau, “The Exchange of Social Rewards,” from *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, 1964: p. 103-105

Oct 3 Society, Social Structure and Interaction – Micro to Macro

- Kendall, Chapter 5: p. 136-155
- C&G- Max Weber, “Characteristics of Bureaucracy,” 1946: p. 126-127
- C&G- Adler & Adler, “Backboards & Blackboards,” 1991: p. 113-121

Oct 5 Groups, Organizations, and Control

- Kendall, Chapter 6: p. 180-201
- Robert Cialdini, “Social Proof,” from *Influence*, 1993: p. 94-126*
- C&G- Philip Meyer, “If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably,” 1970: p. 465-472

Week 6: Deviance and Crime

Oct 10

- Kendall, Chapter 7: 204-231
- Emile Durkheim, "The Normality of Crime" *
- **C&G-** D.L. Rosenhan, "On Being Sane in Insane Places," 1973: p. 244-256
- **C&G-** Barry Glassner, "The Culture of Fear," 1998: p. 223-230

PART III: SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Week 7: Race, Class and Education

Oct 12 Class and Stratification

- Kendall, Chapter 8: p. 263- 272
- **C&G-** Herbert J. Gans, "No, Poverty Has Not Disappeared," 1971: p. 159-164
- **C&G-** Andrew Hacker, "Money and the World We Want," 1997: p. 133-139
- **C&G-** Julie Schor, "Keeping Up with the Trumps," from *The Overspent American*, 1998: p. 149-152

Oct 17 Race

- Kendall, Chapter 10: p. 308-325
- **C&G-** Richard Kahlenberg, "Class, Not Race," 1995: p. 153-159
- **C&G-** Omi and Winant, "Racial Formations," 1996: p. 169-173

Film: Hoop Dreams

Oct 19 Education

- **C&G-** Jonathan Kozol, "Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools" 1991: p. 311-315
- **C&G-** Orfield et al., "Deepening Segregation in American Public Schools," 1997: p. 316-325

Week 8: Gender

Oct 24 What is Gender?

- Kendall, Chapter 11: p. 349-356
- Return to Pollack (9/26)
- Chrys Ingraham, "Lifting the Veil" from *White Weddings*, 1999: p. 3-23 *
- Sabine Lang, "Lesbians, Men-Women, and Two-Spirits" *

Oct 26 Gender and Inequality

- Kendall, Chapter 11: p. 365-375
- Fuentes & Ehrenreich, "Around the World with Multinational Corporations" and "South of the Border, Down Mexico Way," from *Women in the Global Factory*, 1983*

Paper 2 due

PART IV: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Week 9: The Economy and Work

Oct 31

- Kendall, Chapter 13: p. 408-424
- Ritzer, *McDonaldization*, Chapters 1-4
- C&G- Jeremy Rifkin, "The End of Work," 1995: p. 393-399
- C&G- George Ritzer, "The Credit Card: Private Troubles and Public Issues," 1995: p. 407-415

Film: Roger and Me

Nov 2

- Kendall, Chapter 13: p. 426-437
- Ritzer, *McDonaldization*, Chapters 4-6
- C&G- Diana M. Zuckerman, "Welfare Reform in America," 2000: p. 400-406

Week 10: The Economy and Work/ Globalization

Nov 7 **Globalization**

- Ritzer, *McDonaldization*, Chapters 7-10

Nov 9 **Global Inequality**

- Kendall, Chapter 9: p. 296-303
- Jagdish Bhagwati, "In Defense of Globalization" *

Week 11: Families and Intimate Relationships

Nov 14 **Myths vs. Realities**

- Kendall, Chapter 15: p. 476-488
- Stephanie Coontz, "'Leave it to Beaver' and 'Ozzie and Harriet': American Families in the 1950s," from *The Way We Never Were*, 1992: p. 23-41
- C&G- Leonard Cargan, "Being Single on Noah's Ark" : p. 263-267
- C&G- Skolnick & Skolnick, "Family in Transition," 2001: p. 268- 276

Nov 16 **Changes in Family Life**

- Kendall, Chapter 15: p. 488-501
- Arlie Hochschild, "Marriage in the Stalled Revolution" and "The Family of the Traditional: Frank and Carmen Delacorte," from *The Second Shift*, 1989 *

Week 12: Religion

Nov 21

Paper 3 due

- Kendall, Chapter 17: p. 554-562, and 573-575

- **C&G-** Emile Durkheim, “The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,” 1915
- **C&G-** James Aho, “Popular Christianity and Political Extremism in the United States,” 1996
- **C&G-** Clanton and Lio, “The Decline of the American Civil Religion?” 2001

Nov 23: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

Week 13: Health and Illness

Nov 28 Health Care

- Kendall, Chapter 18: p. 590-600
- **C&G-** Jeremy Seabrook, “A World Growing Old,” 2003: p. 479-484
- **C&G-** Taylor and Comite, “Blood Sport: Do-or-Die Time,” 2004: p. 495-501
- **C&G-** Edward L. Kain, “Some Sociological Aspects of HIV Disease,” p. 502-509

Nov 30 Mental Illness and Disability

- Kendall, Chapter 18: p. 600-608
- Return to Rosenhan, p. 244
- Arthur Kleinman, “What is a Psychiatric Diagnosis?” from *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 1988: p. 5-17
- Karp, Chapters 1 and 7 from *Speaking of Sadness*

PART V: SOCIAL CHANGE

Week 14: Social Movements and Social Change

Dec 5

- Kendall, Chapter 20: p. 661- 675
- **C&G-** Barry D. Adam, “Globalization and the Mobilization of Gay and Lesbian Communities,” 2001: p. 549-553
- **C&G-** Inglehart & Baker, “Modernization’s Challenge to Traditional Values,” 2001: p. 554-559

Dec 7 WRAP-UP/ Review

- **C&G-** David Pearce Snyder, “Five Meta-Trends Changing the World,” 2004: p. 568-574

FINAL EXAM