INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY AS A CORE COURSE

What is the aim of sociological inquiry? What types of issues do sociologists address? How does one do sociology? This course is designed to provide you with an overview of the field of sociology as well as get you excited about sociology! Sociological inquiry has incredible breadth spanning the study of large scale social change including industrialization of economy, the growth of bureaucratic systems of power, and urbanization of population, and the small scale social interactions of human beings in everyday life. Over the course of the semester, you will become familiar with sociological theories, methods, and key sociological concepts. We will examine the ways that our social worlds are built, the ways they are maintained, and the ways they change. In doing so, we will consider how people create, make sense of, reproduce, and/or challenge the meaning and experience of everyday life. The goal of this course is to provoke thought about what we take for granted as “natural” about social order, in order that we may think more critically about the ways our social interactions create, reinforce and challenge the cultural practices and social institutions that shape our lives. Most importantly, you will learn to think with a “sociological imagination.”

Course Requirements: There is no extra credit so plan accordingly and prepare. It is your responsibility to make sure that you understand the assignments and when they are due.

I. Class Participation (20%) – This course emphasizes the reading and analysis of texts. Each student is expected to complete the reading. This is essential for passing the class. We will reference the readings closely. Be prepared to be called on in class. Pop quizzes may take place if students do not complete the readings. Also, chronic lateness to class will have a negative impact on your class participation grade. Your participation in class discussion during group presentations (see below) is also a part of your overall participation grade.

- If you come to class regularly, but never speak, the highest grade you are eligible to receive for class participation is a B-.
- If you participate regularly, but never or rarely address the reading, the highest grade you are eligible to receive is a B-.
- Take notes on the reading and bring them to class. Ask questions. Be thoughtful and respectful in your participation.

II. Group Presentation and Study Guide (10%) – Each of you will be required to present the readings and lead discussion for one class, in teams of four. There will be a sign up sheet the second week of class. The discussion should run approximately 30-40 minutes, and should address the following:
a. The major arguments of the day’s readings as you understand them.

b. Your analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the readings, focusing on their arguments.

c. Discussion questions concerning the readings as they relate to other class materials and relevant current events.

d. The above should be compiled into a study guide (for your exams) that will be posted on the class’s Blackboard site. Submit study guide to Prof. Arend via email by the day of your presentation for full credit. This should not just be a copy of your PowerPoint notes (should you use PowerPoint, which is not required).

You will not have time to present all aspects of the reading. Discuss what you understand to be the most important and/or interesting. The best group presentations are always the result of genuine group discussion and preparation, rather than dividing the reading among yourselves, not knowing what the other members will say. They also include critical reflection on the reading, not just a reiteration of what you have read. This assignment will be graded A, B, C etc. with no pluses or minuses.

III. Papers (10% each or 20% total) – You will write two papers for this course. You will receive separate instructions for each paper. The first will be an analysis of a case study. The second will be the analysis of a social experiment that you will conduct.

In terms of written work:

  a. All papers should be double-spaced.
  b. Margins should be standard, unless previously agreed upon in special circumstances.
  c. The font of all papers will be 12 point, Times New Roman or the like. If you want to use other specifications, check with Prof. Arend first.
  d. All assignments should demonstrate knowledge of style, grammar, punctuation and attribution appropriate to college level writing.
  e. Please print double-sided and do not use plastic paper covers.

Late Paper Policy: Writing assignments are due at class time and should not be submitted by email unless prior approval has been given. Please print double-sided. Every calendar day your paper is late results in the lowering of your grade by one third. For example, if you turn an “A” paper in on a Friday when it was due on the previous Tuesday, your grade will be a B.

IV. Midterm and Final Exam (25% each) – Multiple Choice, True/False, Short Answer. If you miss an exam you will need to have your dean contact me before I will consider a make-up.

Summary of Course Grading:

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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>Class presentation and study guide</td>
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<td>Paper #1</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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Grade Scale: (no rounding, an 89.9% is a B+)

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Attendance Policy

Students should come to class regularly. Each student may have four absences without penalty. Each absence after four results in a one-third lowering of the final grade. So, if you have five absences and you score a “B” in the course, your final grade will be a “B-”. There is no need to tell the instructor the nature of your absence. Use your absences wisely and plan for the likelihood that you will be sick sometime this semester.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

I take cheating and plagiarism extremely seriously. I have appended the University’s academic integrity statement to this syllabus. You are responsible for knowing what that policy is, and how cheating and plagiarism are defined.

Class Environment

- Laptops are not allowed in the classroom.
- Cell phones should be turned off before class, not just silenced.
- You may bring drinks to class and, if you need it, a small snack. Please do not eat full meals or make noise with wrappers.
- Please be respectful of each other, especially during class discussions where you may have disagreements over course material.
- Use the restroom before class. Please do not leave the room during class time unless it is an emergency.

Required Texts

Charon and Vigilant, eds., THE MEANING OF SOCIOLOGY (READER), 9TH EDITION
Venkatesh, GANG LEADER FOR A DAY
Karp, IS IT ME OR MY MEDS?
Handouts
COURSE OUTLINE

Note: Students should be prepared to discuss the reading on the day of the corresponding class listed. Discussions of particular readings often extend beyond one class and you also should be prepared to finish that discussion.

I. What is Sociology?

Tuesday, January 19: General Introduction

Thursday, January 21:
- Reader, Part I The Discipline of Sociology, all

II. Socialization and the Social Construction of Reality

Tuesday, January 26:
- Handout, “Extreme Isolation,” Kingsley Davis
- Reader, “Social Identity,” Richard Jenkins, 30
- Reader, “The Importance of Primary Groups,” Dexter C. Dunphy, 33

Thursday, September 28:
- Reader, “Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple,” Charles Lindholm, 43
- Reader, “Collective Trauma at Buffalo Creek,” Kai Erikson, 49
- Reader, “The Meaning and the Importance of the City,” William A. Schwab, 56

Tuesday, February 2:

Thursday, February 4:
- Tough Guise, film screened in class

Tuesday, February 9:
- Handout, “Life as the Maid’s Daughter: An Exploration of the Everyday Boundaries of Race, Class, and Gender,” Mary Romero
- Discuss Messner, assigned for previous class

III. Social Inequalities, Social Structure: Race, Class, Gender

Thursday, February 11:
- Reader, “Gender as Structure,” Barbara J. Risman, 88
Tuesday, February 16:
- Reader, “Four Modes of Inequality,” William M. Dugger, 94
- Reader, “The Uses of Poverty: the Poor Pay All,” Herbert Gans, 117

Thursday, February 18:
- Reader, “Class in Everyday Life,” Stanley Aronowitz, 121
- Reader, “Race, Wealth, and Equality,” Oliver and Shapiro, 140

Tuesday, February 23:
- Reader, “Race, Wealth, and Equality,” Oliver and Shapiro, 140 (cont.)
- Reader, “Occupational Opportunities and Race,” Stephen Steinberg, 148

Thursday, February 25: **Paper #1 Due**
- *Ethnic Notions*, screen film in class

March 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th}: No class. Spring Break

Tuesday, March 9:
- Blackboard, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies,” Peggy McIntosh

Thursday, March 11: **Midterm**

IV. Social Inequalities, Social Structure: Social Institutions

Tuesday, March 16:
- Reader, “The American Dream,” McNamee and Miller, Jr., 236

Thursday, March 18:
- Reader, “The Institution of Capitalism,” Zweig, 251
- Reader, “The Dominance of the Corporation,” Carl Boggs, 262

Tuesday, March 23:
- *Gang Leader for a Day*, by Sudhir Venkatesh, Preface, chs. 1-3

Thursday, March 25:
- Reader, “Government Programs and Social Cohesion,” Skocpol, 269
- Reader, “The Shame of the Nation,” Jonathan Kozol, 321
- Reader, “The Culture of the School,” Hallinan, 329
Tuesday, March 30: Class Canceled
Thursday, April 1: No class. Easter Break.

Tuesday, April 6:
- *Gang Leader for a Day*, chs. 4-6

Thursday, April 8:
- Reader, “Family in Transition, 2007,” Skolnick and Skolnick, 286
- Reader, “The Working Wife as an Urbanized Peasant,” Hochschild with Machung, 190

Tuesday, April 13:
- Reader “Family Life and Economic Success,” Lisa A. Keister, 294
- Reader “Unequal Childhoods,” Annette Lareau, 301

Thursday, April 15:
- *Gang Leader for a Day*, chs. 7-8
- Reader, “Punishment and Inequality in America,” Bruce Western, 156

V. Society and the Self: Deviance and Social Control

Tuesday, April 20:
- Reader, “Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” by Erving Goffman, 38
- Reader “Society, Social Control, and the Individual” by Peter L. Berger, 61

Thursday, April 22:
- *Is It Me or My Meds?* by David Karp, prologue-chapter 3, pp. 1-94.

Tuesday, April 27:
- Reader, “The Pathology of Imprisonment,” Philip G. Zimbardo, 68
- Reader, “If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would you? Probably,” Philip Meyer, 71

Thursday, April 29:
- *Is It Me or My Meds?* chapters 4-5, pp. 95-165

Tuesday, May 4:
- *Is It Me or My Meds?* chapters 6-7, pp. 167-229 (Epilogue not required but highly recommended.)

Thursday, May 6: **Paper #2 Due**
- Wrap up class and review for final exam

**In class final exam during the period assigned by the university. Date/time TBA**
Because this introductory course fulfills one of the university's core requirements in the social sciences it necessarily contains certain elements common to all university core courses. Among these elements are the following:

1. **A concern with the perennial questions about human existence.** Virtually by definition, an introduction to sociology course deals with fundamental questions about what it means to be a human being living in a society at a given moment in history. In this course we will confront such basic questions as: What is the nature of human nature? What is the place of biology and culture, respectively, in shaping human behavior? Why do human beings commit themselves to a society? Why do persons normally conform to the demands of society? Do we have free will? What is the basis for social order? How does one become a functioning human being in society? Why is there so much human conflict? What are the forces that create group life and sometimes generate intolerance among groups? What is the character of the social self? What is the role of community in sustaining a personal sense of well being? The purpose of our discussion will not be to answer definitively such questions, but to suggest the way a sociological perspective approaches them.

2. **An attention to the role of history in human affairs.** The view taken in this course is that one's place in history shapes the kind of consciousness it is possible to have. In this regard, I do not see sociology as producing immutable "laws" that transcend history and culture. Rather, the task is to understand how humans' understanding of themselves and their societies shifts over time. In fact, sociology itself was a response to the transformations created by the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century. We will, therefore, consider how such "classical" sociological theorists as Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber considered the effects of society's transition from an agrarian to an urban order. In this discussion, as throughout the course, we will consider how the strength of the "social bond" between the individual and the larger society changes over time. Since American society continues to evolve, we will consider, as well, how the current movement of American society from a production-based economy to a service-based economy is once again transforming human relations.

3. **An attention to cultural diversity.** Two additional and basic premises of this course are that ultimately all knowledge is comparative and that all human values must be considered in cultural context. Wherever possible, cross cultural comparisons and examples will be used to highlight the organization of our own culture. Of course, since American society is itself an enormously complex, variegated, pluralistic society, our attention throughout the semester will inevitably be drawn to the multiplicity of behavioral and value systems found in the United States. Appreciation of cultural differences of all sorts helps to meet a primary mission of any sociology course. It is to make persons less self righteous about the superiority of their own cultural beliefs. Both class conversation and readings are designed to put students into contact with class and race segments of American society that may be very different from their own group memberships.

4. **An attention to the methodology of the field.** Sociologists normally consider their discipline as one of the social "sciences." Identification with science means that the discipline's understanding of the world is based on carefully collected data. The writing assignment for the course requires students to collect some data on their own and to analyze it. Given the
assignment, a substantial amount of class time will be spent talking about the nature of deductive and inductive inquiry, the requirements of scientific investigation, the nature of participant observation field research in particular, the contents of field notes, and strategies for moving from data to analysis.

5. **A writing component.** Students will be encouraged to discuss their work and to share drafts of their papers with each other. As time allows, we will discuss what C.W. Mills called "intellectual craftsmanship." As part of that discussion we will talk about what constitutes powerful social science writing. Here I am committed to two basic ideas about writing: (1) Writers should never confuse the complexity of their thinking with complicated writing. (2) Writing is not putting on paper what you think. It is, rather, part of the process of telling you what you think.

6. **Contributing to the development of a personal philosophy of life.** The psychologist Carl Jung has said, "There is no coming to consciousness without pain." Studying sociology can be uncomfortable for some people because it forces them to question essential ideas that have guided their lives. Much sociology is dedicated to "debunking" the myths and propaganda that allow some people to order their private lives. One of the first messages of sociology is that "things aren't always what they first seem to be." Often, what we take to be common sense turns out, upon closer investigation, to be neither common nor sensical. My approach in this class places primary emphasis on the basic processes of interaction that shape all human relations, from those among anonymous urbanites to our most precious intimacies. Thus, I expect the class to enhance each student's ability to think about core life questions about the quality of relationships, family involvement, child-rearing, the meaning of work, and personal commitment to social change in a more complex and nuanced way.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy**

Boston College Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures (excerpted)
Copied from: [http://www.bc.edu/integrity](http://www.bc.edu/integrity)

The pursuit of knowledge can proceed only when scholars take responsibility and receive credit for their work. Recognition of individual contributions to knowledge and of the intellectual property of others builds trust within the university and encourages the sharing of ideas that is essential to scholarship. Similarly, the educational process requires that individuals present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique, and eventual reformulation. Presentation of others' work as one's own is not only intellectual dishonesty, but also undermines the educational process.

**Standards:** Academic integrity is violated by any dishonest act which is committed in an academic context including, but not restricted to the following:

**Cheating** is the fraudulent or dishonest presentation of work. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

* the use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in examinations or other academic exercises submitted for evaluation;
* fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data, results, sources for papers or reports, or in clinical practice, as in reporting experiments, measurements, statistical analyses, tests, or other studies never performed; manipulating or altering data or other manifestations of research to achieve a desired result; selective reporting, including the deliberate suppression of conflicting or unwanted data;
* falsification of papers, official records, or reports;
* copying from another student's work;
* actions that destroy or alter the work of another student;
* unauthorized cooperation in completing assignments or during an examination;
* the use of purchased essays or term papers, or of purchased preparatory research for such papers;
* submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from the instructors involved;
* dishonesty in requests for make-up exams, for extensions of deadlines for submitting papers, and in any other matter relating to a course.

Plagiarism is the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrations, or statements of another person or source, and presenting them as one's own. Each student is responsible for learning and using proper methods of paraphrasing and footnoting, quotation, and other forms of citation, to ensure that the original author, speaker, illustrator, or source of the material used is clearly acknowledged.

Other breaches of academic integrity include:
* the misrepresentation of one's own or another's identity for academic purposes;
* the misrepresentation of material facts or circumstances in relation to examinations, papers, or other evaluative activities;
* the sale of papers, essays, or research for fraudulent use;
* the alteration or falsification of official University records;
* the unauthorized use of University academic facilities or equipment, including computer accounts and files;
* the unauthorized recording, sale, purchase, or use of academic lectures, academic computer software, or other instructional materials;
* the expropriation or abuse of ideas and preliminary data obtained during the process of editorial or peer review of work submitted to journals, or in proposals for funding by agency panels or by internal University committees;
* the expropriation and/or inappropriate dissemination of personally-identifying human subject data;
* the unauthorized removal, mutilation, or deliberate concealment of materials in University libraries, media, or academic resource centers.

Collusion is defined as assistance or an attempt to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty. Collusion is distinct from collaborative learning, which may be a valuable component of students' scholarly development. Acceptable levels of collaboration vary in different courses, and students are expected to consult with their instructor if they are uncertain whether their cooperative activities are acceptable.