SC001.02: Introduction to Sociology
Fall 2010, Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 3:00-3:50 p.m. (at Campion 231)

Instructor: Rie Taniguchi                     Office: McGuinn 410B
E-mail: tanigucr@bc.edu                      Office hours: Monday & Wednesdays 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Course Description and Objectives
Throughout the semester, you will be introduced to various theories and topics in the field of sociology. You will be asked, through personal reflection, participation in class discussions and presentations, and the completion of written assignments, to apply these theories to issues that are integral in your own lives and the broader contemporary social world.

The purpose of the class is to help you establish a “sociological perspective” that will enable you to better understand social structure, institutions and cultural systems that surround you. Throughout the semester, the class also aims to highlight your role within such system. At the end of this course, you should be able to identify important social phenomena, critically analyzing these phenomena by using sociological imagination, relate these phenomena to your own social world, and clearly communicating your analysis both orally and in writing.

Required Texts

| *Jeffrey C. Alexander and Kenneth Thompson, A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology (Boulder: Paradigm, 2008). |

These books are available in the BC bookstore, but used copies are also available on websites such as Amazon.com. There is also a copy of these books in the Reserve Room of the O’Neill Library. The required texts are starred (*) in the syllabus below.

There are also additional readings, which are available on WebCT and on the Library’s Course Reserves web page.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Class Attendance and Participation 15%
Class Attendance is mandatory and will have a significant effect on your final grade. Each student may have two unexcused absences without penalty. Each unexcused absence after two results in a one-third lowering of the final grade. (For example, if you have three unexcused absences and your final grade is a B, it will become a B-). Funerals, serious illness, job interviews, religious holidays, and scheduled sporting events for student athletes that are properly documented are excused absences. If you need to miss a class, please let me know prior to class.

I expect that you read the assigned materials prior to the class and actively participate in class discussions. Sharing of your thoughts and reflections is strongly appreciated and encouraged.
Critical Reflection Papers 30%
You will be asked to complete five (5) reflection papers (out of 10 weeks/topics) over the course of the semester. These papers should be a maximum of three (3), double-spaced pages and due on each Monday following the week.

Discussion Session Leader and 5-Page Paper 25%
Early in the semester, you will choose one class session where you (in partnership with 2-3 other students) will prepare discussion questions based on the assigned readings as well as serve as a discussion leader and run the class discussion for 40 minutes. You need to choose your discussion session by September 15th. In addition, you will individually prepare a minimum 5-page (maximum 8-page) double-spaced paper where you will discuss your reflections on the assigned readings (and also integrate minimum of one extra reading from that week) and the class discussion.

Midterm exam 15%
Final exam 15%

*There are no make-up exams in this class. Please make arrangements to attend both the in-class midterm and the final exam.

*No late work will be accepted unless an extension is granted by me BEFORE THE DUE DATE of the assignment.

*More information on each assignment will be provided in class and Blackboard Vista (Web CT).

The Core Course
This is a core course which is designed to contain six elements common to all university core courses. First, the introduction to sociology addresses 1) the perennial questions of human existence—questions regarding what it means to be a human living in a society at given moment in history. Fundamental questions such as what drives human behavior? What are the causes of poverty and inequality in globalizing social world? are addressed throughout the semester. Secondly and thirdly, the course pays special attention to the role of history and culture in understanding society. In-depth understanding of 2) historical context(s) and 3) cultural diversity is considered to be crucial in accurately addressing the above questions. Fourthly, we will examine various 4) methodological approaches of the field. The class will address both deductive and inductive inquiry. Through the assignments, students will be exposed to various methodologies of sociological inquiry, placing particular focus on qualitative methods. Fifthly, students are required to 5) read and write extensively which should help them expand their critical thinking skills and analytical abilities. Lastly, the course will help the students develop 6) personal philosophy of life which should be reflective of enhanced and more complex and nuanced understanding of the social world that they inhabit.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
Cheating, Plagiarism and fabrication of information or citations are strictly forbidden. Plagiarizing students will fail the class, regardless of circumstances. Please read carefully BC's policy on academic integrity: http://www.bc.edu/integrity
*Policies on bringing personal computer
You can bring your computer to the class for note-taking purpose only (Except for your presentation). If you decide to bring your computer to the class, I will ask you to e-mail me bi-weekly your class notes. Please send me an e-mail, if you plan to bring your computer to the class.

**Course Outline**

*Preliminary Schedule-subject to change*

**Week 1: Introduction to Sociology**

**Wednesday, September 8**
Introduction and Course Overview

**Friday, September 10**
What is Sociology? How Do Sociologists Understand the World?

*Readings:*
- Alexander and Thompson “Sociological Stories and Key Concepts” (P4-27)
- Berger, Peter. “Invitation to Sociology”
- Lemert, Charles C. “Introduction” *Social Things*
- Ruane & Cerulo, “Introduction: the Sociological Perspective” *Second Thoughts*

**Week 2: Tools for Theorizing about the Social World**

**Monday, September 13**
The Sociological Imagination

*Readings:*
- C. Wright Mills, “The Promise” (*Ferguson, P1-7)
- Lemert, Charles C. Ch.1 “Imagining Social Things, Competently” *Social Things*
- Donna Gaines, “Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia’s Dead-End Kids” (*Ferguson, P7-19)
- Mary Romero, “An Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey” (*Ferguson, P19-33)

**Wednesday, September 15**
DISCUSSION SESSION SELECTION DUE
Social Research and Methods of Sociological Inquiry

*Readings:*
- Alexander and Thompson Ch 2 “Sociological Methods” (P30-61)
- Mitchell Duneier, “Sidework” (*Ferguson, P53-60)

**Friday, September 17**
Socialization & Social Construction of Identities

*Readings:*
- Alexander and Thompson Ch 5 “Socialization and the Life Cycle” (P121-165)
- Thorne Barrie, Ch 1 “Children and Gender” (P1-10) *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School.*
- Lisa J. McIntype, Ch 10 “Socialization” *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*
Week 3: Gender
Monday, September 20
Construction of Gender

Lecture (first 20 minutes) & film “Tough Guise” (first 32 minutes)

Readings:
* Alexander and Thompson Ch 9 “Gender” (P269-278)
  Judith Lorber, “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender” Ch Seeing Ourselves
  Fausto-Sterling, Anne. “The Biological Connection: An Introduction” Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men


Wednesday, September 22:
Gendered Stratification

Quick lecture (15 minutes) and group activities on, The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World (35 minutes)

Readings:
* Alexander and Thompson Ch 9 “Gender” (P278-297)
  Barbara Riesman, “Gender as Structure” (*Ferguson, P295-304)

  Recommended: Joni Seager. The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World (on Reserve at library)
  Meika Loe, “Working at Bazooms: The Intersection of Power, Gender, and Sexuality” (*Ferguson, P330-345)

Friday, September 24
Discussion Session by Group 1

Readings:
  C.J. Pascoe, “Dude, You’re a Fag?”(*Ferguson, P305-313)
  Amy Young et al., “Drinking Like a Guy” Frequent Binge Drinking Among Undergraduate Women” (*Ferguson, P314-330)

Week 4: Race and Ethnicity
Monday, September 27

Construction of Race
Filem (in class): Race: The Power of an Illusion. The Difference Between Us (56 minutes)

Readings:
  * Alexander and Thompson Ch 10 “Race & Ethnicity” (P299-329)
Wednesday, September 29

Material consequence of racial construction (inequality and discrimination)

Readings:
- Ruane and Cerulo, Essay 14: Conventional Wisdom Tells Us...America is the Land of Equal Opportunity” Second Thoughts
- Katherin M. Flower Kim, “Out of Sorts: Adoption and (Un)Desirable Children” (*Ferguson, P371-384)

Friday, October 1

Discussion Session by Group 2
Is America going to be a multicultural society?

Readings:

Week 5: Social Class and Inequality

Monday, October 4:

Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 8 “Inequality” (P239-267)
- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1848) Ch 11 in Seeing Ourselves

Wednesday, October 6:

Film (in class): Waging a Living

Readings:
- Kingsley et al., “Some Principles of Stratification” (*Ferguson, P247-256)

Friday, October 8

Discussion Session by Group 3

Readings:
- Barbara Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America” (*Ferguson, P282-295)

Monday, October 11- Holiday There is NO CLASS!

Week 6: Economy and Work

Wednesday, October 13
Readings:
* Alexander and Thompson Ch12 “Work and the Economy” (P365-393)
  Karl Marx, “Alienated Labor” (1844) Ch 46 in Seeing Ourselves

Friday, October 15
Discussion Session by Group 4

Readings:
Robin Leidner, “Over the Counter McDonald’s” (*Ferguson, P474-488)

Week 7: Health and Medicine
Monday, October 18

Readings:
* Alexander and Thompson Ch 14 “Health & Medicine” (P427-442)
  David A. Karp, “Illness and Identity” (*Ferguson, P547-560)

Wednesday, October 20
Film (in class): Sicko

Readings:
* Alexander and Thompson Ch 14 “Health & Medicine” (P442-453)

Friday, October 22
Discussion Session by Group 5

Readings:
Lillian B. Ruben, “Sand Castles and Snake Pits” (*Ferguson, P527-P534)

Monday, October 25- Midterm Examination in Class

Week 8: Politics and the State
Wednesday, October 27

Readings:
* Alexander and Thompson Ch 17 “Politics, Publics and the State” (P511-537)
  C. Wright Mills, “The Power Elite” (*Ferguson, P399-406)
Friday, October 29
Discussion Session by Group 6

Readings:

Week 9: Culture
Monday, November 1
What is Culture? How does Culture Influence Our Social World?

Readings:
*Alexander and Thompson “Thinking Sociologically about Culture” under Ch 3 “Cultural Structures” (P68-89)
Elijah Anderson, “Code of the Street” Ch 11 in Readings for Sociology

Wednesday, November 3
How does Culture Influence Self-Representation? Fashion and Beauty

Midterm Evaluation (15 minutes)

Readings:
*Alexander and Thompson Ch 3 “Cultural Structures” (P64-68)
Laura Miller, “No body is exempt: Beauty compulsion and resistance in Japan.” Storytelling Sociology: Narrative as Social Inquiry


Friday, November 5
Discussion Session by Group 7

Readings:
Barry Glassner, “The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things” (*Ferguson, P61-68)

Week 10: Mass Media
Monday, November 8
Mass Media and Cultural Industry

Readings:
*Alexander and Thompson Ch 4 “Media and Communication” (P91-119)

Recommended:
Wednesday, November 10
Power of Media

Film (in class): Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land: U. S. Media and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Readings:

Friday, November 12
Discussion Session by Group 8

Readings:
Gregory Mantsios, “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible” (*Ferguson, P433-441)
Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, “Muslim Americans in the News before and after 9/11” (*Ferguson, P441-453)

Week 11: Consumer Culture and the Reproduction of Class and Inequality
Monday, November 15

Readings
Thorstein Veblen, “Conspicuous Consumption” (1899) The Consumer Society Reader

Recommended: *Revisit Alexander and Thompson Ch 8 under “Culture and Inequality” (P258-264), Ch 3 under “Class, Culture, and Genre” (P85-88)

Wednesday, November 17
Film (in class): People Like Us

Juliet B. Schor, Chs 2-4 (P25-111) “Communicating with Commodities”, “Visible Lifestyle” and “When Spending Becomes You” The Overspent American

Friday, November 19
Discussion Session by Group 9

Readings

Week 12: Globalization (1)
Monday, November 22
What is Globalization? Homogenizing Culture across the World?
Readings:
Revisit *Alexander and Thompson under “Globalization” (P19-21)
Manfred B. Steger, Ch 5 “The Cultural Dimension of Globalization” (P69-92)
Globalization: A Very Short Introduction

Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy”
Ch 11 The Globalization Reader.
James L. Watson. “McDonald’s in Hong Kong: Consumerism, Dietary Change, and the Rise of a Children’s Culture” Readings for Sociology

Wednesday, November 24-26. Thanks Giving Holiday-No class!

Week 13: Globalization (2)
Monday, November 29
Global Restructuring of Economy

Readings:

Recommended:
Alejandro Portes, selected pages (P359-368) from “Neoliberalism and the Sociology of Development: Emerging Trends and Unanticipated Facts” From Modernization to Globalization

Wednesday, December 1
Global Restructuring of Ordinary People’s Lives
Film (in class): “Life and Debt”

Readings:
Joseph E. Stiglitz, “Broken Promises” Ch 2 in Globalization and Its Discontents

Friday, December 3
Film (in class): “Life and Debt” (continues)

Readings:
Harriet Friedmann, Ch 1 “Remaking Traditions: How We Eat, What We Eat and the Changing Political Economy of Food” Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain (P36-58)

Week 14: Globalization (3)
Monday, December 6
Resistance and Alternatives to Globalization
Discussion Session by Group 10
Readings:
Joseph E. Stiglitz, Ch 9 “Way Ahead” in *Globalization and Its Discontents*
International Forum on Globalization, “A Better World is Possible!” Ch 60 in *The Globalization Reader* (Also see [http://www.ifg.org/index.htm](http://www.ifg.org/index.htm))
Vandana Shiva, “Ecological Balance in an Era of Globalization” Ch 57 in *The Globalization Reader*

Wednesday, December 8
Review and Wrap-Up

**Final Exam on Tuesday December 21, at 9AM**