SC00104: Introduction to Sociology  
Fall 2011, Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 – 9:50 p.m. (at Campion 231)  

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 10:30 a.m. -12:00

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 to apply these theories to issues that are integral in your own lives and the broader social world. Your responsibilities include reading of the assigned materials, personal reflections (in the form of writing) as well as participation in class discussions and group presentation.

The purpose of the class is to help establish a “sociological perspective” that will enable you to better understand social structure, culture and institutions surrounding you and be aware of your role within the society. At the end of this course, you should be able to identify important social phenomena, critically analyzing these phenomena by using *sociological imagination*, relate them 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 are also 2 copies of these books at the Course Reserve in the O’Neill Library. The required texts are starred (*) in the syllabus below.

All the additional readings are available on WebCT (https://cms.bc.edu) and on the Library’s Course Reserves web page (http://bc.edu/libraries/)

Course Requirements and Grading:

Class Attendance and Participation  20%

Class Attendance is mandatory and will have a significant effect on your final grade. Each unexcused absence after 4 results in a one-third lowering of the final grade. (For example, if you have 5 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 encouraged. Your attendance and participation is closely monitored and your tentative participation grade is notified at midterm. Participation is graded based on 1) your attentiveness to class lectures and peer’s comments 2) your preparedness and knowledge of the materials 3) quality and efforts of your participation and 4) overall attendance.
Critical Reflection Papers  25%
You will be asked to complete four (4) reflection papers (out of 9 weeks/topics-starting on the week 3, “Gender”) over the course of the semester. These papers should be approximately three (3), double-spaced pages and due on each Monday following the week.

Discussion Leader and 5-Page Paper  25%
Early in the semester, you will choose one class period where you (in partnership with 3-4 other students) will perform as discussion leader(s) who are in charge of running a class discussion, approximately for 45-50 minutes. Discussion sessions are generally scheduled on Friday of the week. As a group, you need to prepare 3-4 discussion questions based on the assigned readings for that day (Friday) accompanied by 3-4 additional questions on the films and readings from earlier the week (materials from Monday and Wednesday). Please read a separate instruction sheet for specific guidelines. You need to choose a date for your discussion leader presentation by Wednesday, September 14. After the presentation, you will individually prepare a minimum 5-page (maximum 8-page) double-spaced paper where you will discuss and reflect the assigned readings, film(s), discussion leader experiences and content of 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 exams.

*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 (6) 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. Some of the fundamental questions we aim to address are: what drives human behavior in our society? What are some causes and structures of poverty and inequality in the globalizing social context? Secondly, this course pays particular attention to the role of history and culture in understanding our society. In-depth exploration of 2) historical context(s) and 3) cultural diversity is considered to be crucial in understanding the above questions. Thirdly, we will examine various 4) methodological approaches of the field of sociology, including both deductive and inductive inquiry. Through the assignments, students will be exposed to various methodologies of sociological inquiry, placing particular focus on qualitative methods. Fourthly, students are required to 5) read and write extensively which should help them expand their critical thinking and analytical abilities. Lastly, the course will help the students develop 6) personal philosophy of life which should be reflective of enhanced and more 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

*Since this is heavily participation-driven class, I request students not to turn on any electronic items (computer, iPhone etc) during the class period. Every powerpoint lecture will be posted on WebCT after the class for your convenience. Therefore I strongly request students to refrain from using laptop during the class.
Course Outline
Preliminary Schedule-subject to change

*You are responsible for reading the materials listed below prior to the class period.
*Recommended readings are not required but listed for students who want to do further readings.

Week 1: Introduction to Sociology (September 7, 9)
Wednesday, September 7
Introduction and course overview

Friday, September 9
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” in Social Things

Week 2: Tools for Theorizing the Social World (September 12 14, 16)
Monday, September 12
The sociological imagination
Readings:
- C. Wright Mills, “The Promise” (*Ferguson, P1-7)
- Lemert, Charles C. Ch.1 “Imagining Social Things, Competently” in Social Things

Choose one reading from below:
- 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 14
Social research and methods of sociological inquiry
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 2 “Sociological Methods” (P30-61)

Choose one reading from below:
- Craig Haney, W. Curtis Banks and Philip G Zimbardo, “Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison” (*Ferguson, P43-52)
- Mitchell Duneier, “Sidework” (*Ferguson, P53-60)
Friday, September 16
Socialization and social construction of identities
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 5 “Socialization and the Life Cycle” (P121- only until 147, before “Life stages and life cycle”)

Recommended: Lisa J. McIntype, Ch 10 “Socialization” in *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*

Week 3 Gender (September 19, 21, 23)
Monday, September 19
Social construction of gender and gender inequality
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 9 “Gender” (P269-295)
- Judith Lorber, “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender” in *Seeing Ourselves*

Recommended: Barbara Riesman, “Gender as Structure” (*Ferguson, P295-304)

Wednesday, September 21
A film (in class) “Tough Guise”

Choose one from the following:

Friday, September 23
Discussion leader presentation 1: “Gender”
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 (September 26, 28, 30)
Monday, September 26
Social construction of race and ethnicity
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 10 “Race & Ethnicity” (P299-329)

Wednesday, September 28
A film (in class): Race: The Power of an Illusion. The Difference Between Us (56 minutes)
Readings:
- Ruane and Cerulo, Essay 14: Conventional Wisdom Tells Us…America is the Land of Equal- Opportunity” *Second Thoughts*
- Film (watch on your own):
  “True Colors” (20m). ABC's Prime time live, Sept. 26, 1991. Two parts (see below)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuL5EcAwB9c
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gØS3BBmUxvs
Friday, September 30
Discussion leader presentation 2: “Race and Ethnicity”

Readings:

Week 5: Social Class and Inequality (October 3, 5, 7)
Monday, October 3
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 8 “Inequality” (P239-267)

Recommended:
- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1888) (*Ferguson, P468-473)
- Max Weber, “Class, Status, Party” in *Social Theory* edited by Charles Lemert (P115-125)
- Kingsley et al., “Some Principles of Stratification” (*Ferguson, P247-256)

Wednesday, October 5
A film (in class): Waging a Living (75 minutes)
Readings:
- Barbara Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America”(*Ferguson, P282-295)

Friday, October 7
Discussion leader presentation 3: Social Class and Inequality
Readings:

Monday, October 10, Columbus Day, No Class!

Week 6: Education (October 12, 14, 17)
Wednesday, October 12
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 13 “Education” (P396-425)

Friday, October 14
Educational inequality
Readings:
- Jonathan Kozol, “Still Separate, Still Unequal: America’s Educational Apartheid” (*Ferguson, P568-580) and see the film below.
- Film (watch on your own): The Problem We All Live With: Inequalities between Boston Urban and Suburban Schools. (22m)
Monday, October 17
Discussion leader presentation 4: Education
Readings:
- Ann Arnett Ferguson, “Bad boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity” (*Ferguson, P580-588)

Wednesday, October 19
Midterm evaluation in class

Friday, October 21, Midterm Exam in Class!

Week 7: Work and Economy (October 24, 26, 28)
Monday, October 24
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 12 “Work and the Economy” (P365-393)
- Karl Marx, “Alienated Labor” (1844) Ch 46 in Seeing Ourselves (8th edition)


Wednesday, October 26
The rise of consumer-society
Readings:

Friday, October 28
Discussion leader presentation 5: Work and Economy
Readings:
- Robin Leidner, “Over the Counter McDonald’s” (*Ferguson, P474-488)

Week 8: Health and Medicine (October 31, November 2, 4)
Monday, October 31
A lecture followed by a film (in class): Sicko
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 14 “Health & Medicine” (P427-453)

Recommended: Emile Durkheim, “Suicide and Modernity” Social Theory edited by Charles Lemert (P74-82)

Wednesday, November 2
Continues with the film: Sicko
Readings: Choose one from the following:
- David A. Karp, “Illness and Identity” (*Ferguson, P547-560)

Friday, November 4
Discussion leader presentation 6: Health and Medicine
Readings:
- Film (watch on your own): “Sick around the World” (56 minutes) PBS 2008 at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/view/

Week 9: Politics and the State (November 7, 9, 11)
Monday, November 7
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 17 “Politics, Publics and the State” (P511-537)

Recommended: Max Weber, “The types of legitimate domination” in Social Theory by Charles Lemert

Wednesday, November 9
- C. Wright Mills, “The Power Elite” (*Ferguson, P399-406)

Friday, November 11
Discussion leader presentation 7: Politics and the State
Readings:
- William Domhoff, “Can anyone become president of the United States?” in Seeing Ourselves

Week 10: Mass Media (November 14, 16, 18)
Monday, November 14
Mass Media and Cultural Industry
Readings:
- *Alexander and Thompson Ch 4 “Media and Communication” (P91-119)
Wednesday, November 16
A film (in class): Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land: U.S. Media and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Readings:
- Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, “Muslim Americans in the News before and after 9/11” (*Ferguson, P441-453)

Friday, November 18
Discussion leader presentation 8: Mass Media
Readings:
- Gregory Mantsios, “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible” (*Ferguson, P433-441)

Robert McChesney, “The problem of the media: U.S. communication politics in the twenty-first century” selected pages (POSSIBLY Ch 1?)
Or
“Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times” selected pages…

Week 11: Globalization (November 21)
Monday, November 21
General introduction and cultural side of globalization
Readings:
- Eitzen and Zinn “Globalization: An Introduction” (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)
- Manfred B. Steger, “Global Culture: Sameness or Difference?” (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)
- Steve Derné, “Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ally McBeal and Arranged Marriages: Globalization on the Ground in India” (P146-153) (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)

Recommended:
Benjamin Barber, “Jihad vs. McWorld” the Atlantic, March 1992

*Thanksgiving Holidays (November 23rd – November 25th) No Class!

Week 12: Globalization (November 28, 30, December 2)
Monday, November 28
Historical background of economic globalization
Readings:
- Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brendan Smith “Globalization and Its Specter” (P32-39) (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)
Wednesday, November 30
Globalization and perspectives from the Third World
A film (in class): “Life and Debt”
Readings:
- The Dollars and Sense Collective, “The ABCs of the Global Economy” (P82-92) (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)
- Adam Hersh, “Free Markets and Poverty” (P69-73) (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)

Friday, December 2
Continues with the film: “Life and Debt”
Readings:
- Joseph E. Stiglitz, “Broken Promises” Ch 2 in Globalization and Its Discontents

Week 13: Globalization (December 5)
Monday, December 5
Alternative paths to globalization. Discussion leader presentation 9: Globalization
Readings:
- Murray Weidenbaum, “Globalization: Wonder Land or Waste Land?” (P53-60) (from Globalization: the transformation of social worlds)
- Joseph E. Stiglitz, Ch 9 “Way Ahead” in Globalization and Its Discontents


Wednesday, December 7
Review and Wrap-Up

| Final Exam in Class on Friday, December 9th at 2PM! |