

Please note that this syllabus should be regarded as only a general guide to the course. The instructor may have changed specific course content and requirements subsequent to posting this syllabus. Last Modified: 16:14:13 01/18/2012

SC001-02: Introductory Sociology

Spring 2012

Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00pm

Carney Hall 202

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 4:30-6:00 and by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

This course is designed to introduce you to the discipline of sociology - the scientific study of society. Sociologists study the forces that shape the way that people and groups act and interact. How are our individual choices shaped by society? How do our choices help shape society? These are two primary questions we will address in Introductory Sociology. The sociological imagination will be one of our primary tools as we explore society and our place within it. Since we are studying society and therefore ourselves, opportunities to use our sociological imaginations are all around us - in our everyday interactions, in global events, even in the media we consume.

During the semester, we will review research and theory on a range of sociological concepts including culture, socialization, social structure, institutions, deviance, and inequality. We will learn about what sociological research and theory have to tell us about such disparate topics as race, class, gender, the family, the educational system, and work. To this end, we will use a textbook combined with a reader that draws from both classical and contemporary authors, primarily sociologists.

Introductory Sociology & the Social Science Core:

Introductory Sociology is a social science core course, and as such, it will reflect all of the critical components of the BC Core Curriculum. As a core course in sociology this course will meet the following goals:

- a) Help students to ask, and answer "perennial questions"
- b) Incorporate cultural diversity
- c) Present a historical view of the subject
- d) Demonstrate the methodology of the discipline
- e) Include a substantial writing component
- f) Challenge students to create a personal philosophy

Introductory Sociology addresses the 1) **perennial questions** of human existence—questions regarding what it means to be a human living in a society at a given moment in history. Some of the fundamental questions we aim to address are: What drives and shapes human behavior in our society? Is society “fair”? Why do some groups have more power than others? How can we create social change to bring about a more just world? This course pays particular attention to the role of history and culture in better understanding our society. In-depth exploration of 2) **historical context(s)** and 3) **cultural diversity** is key to understanding the types of perennial questions listed above. We will focus intensely on issues of race, class, gender, and inequality in this course, often through a historical lens, to better understand our world today. We will also examine various 4) **methodological approaches** within the field of sociology, including both deductive and inductive inquiry. Through the assignments and readings, you will be exposed to various methodologies of sociological inquiry, placing particular focus on qualitative methods. Students in this course are required to 5) **read and write**

extensively about the sociological concepts we will study, which should help expand your critical thinking and analytical abilities. Finally, the course will help students apply the theories and concepts we discuss to develop a 6) **personal philosophy of life**, which should be reflective of an enhanced and more nuanced understanding of the social world in which we live. You should come away from this course with a better sense of your own place in society and your potential to make a difference in it.

Required Texts and Readings:

- McIntyre, Lisa. 2010. *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*. McGraw-Hill 5th Edition. (Referred to in the assignments as “Core Concepts”)
- McIntyre, Lisa. 2010. *The Practical Skeptic: Readings in Sociology*. McGraw-Hill 5th Edition. (Referred to in the assignments as “Readings”)
- Additional Readings will be available on the course BLACKBOARD site

Course Requirements & Grading:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points Per Assignment</i>	<i>Cumulative Points</i>
Class Participation	25	25
Short Essays	15	40
Paper 1 – Sociological Autobiography	20	60
Paper 2 – Sociological Analysis	20	80
Final Exam	20	100

Class participation:

As a student in this course you are expected to attend classes regularly, be engaged, and actively participate. This course is designed to be discussion based, and needs your participation to be most effective. Discussions and/or lectures are essential to building understanding and will be considered required and important course materials (in other words, take good notes!). Students are expected to come to each class session having completed the assigned readings and prepared to discuss the material. I will take note of the frequency of your participation as well as excessive absences and lateness, as this has an effect on group discussion. Students who are disruptive (which includes poor classroom behavior, arriving late, leaving early, and leaving class regularly) will find their final grade lowered at least a half grade.

Students should come prepared to each class with something to say about the topic. This could be a question, a passage you appreciated, something you found confusing, or a comment related to the material. I understand that students have many different learning styles and there are many ways to demonstrate participation. In addition to in-class participation, participation points can be earned through participation in small group discussion, or outside of class by visiting during office hours, e-mailing questions or additional thoughts after the discussion.

We will begin each class with an opportunity to discuss current events that relate to sociological concepts we cover in this course. You can earn participation points by sharing current events related to sociological ideas in class or through e-mail for me to announce. Each student is required share at least two current event topics over the course of the semester.

Every student will also be required to sign up, as part of a pair or group, to lead discussion for one class during the semester. This will also be considered as part of your class participation grade.

A note on personal electronics and class participation: * Since this class is heavily based on participation and discussion, I request that students refrain from using laptops and other personal electronic devices (computer, iPad, iPhone, etc.) during the class period. I find that such devices tend to be more of a distraction than a learning aid. Powerpoints of lecture slides will be posted on *Blackboard* after the class for your convenience. If you have any questions or concerns about this request, please let me know.

Short Response Essays: There will be ten short response essays assigned throughout the semester (due dates included on the schedule below). These will be 1-2 page essays that should respond to a prompt designed to allow students to interact with the assigned readings. The prompt will be assigned at least one class session before the essay is due. Short response essays will not be accepted late.

Additional information on other assignments (Papers 1 and 2, Final Exam) will be provided as the semester proceeds.

Late work: If you have extenuating circumstances, you must see me BEFORE the due date to discuss a possible extension; otherwise you will lose 5 percentage points each day the assignment is late.

A note on academic integrity:

Academic integrity is a standard of utmost importance in this class. Guidelines for academic integrity in written work are posted on the Boston College website at:

www.bc.edu/integrity

If you have any questions pertaining to the academic integrity guidelines, please come and speak with me. If you are caught violating Boston College's policies on academic integrity, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and the appropriate Dean will be notified in accordance to the rules set forth by Boston College.

Assignment and Reading Schedule:

The following pages contain the assignment and reading schedule. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before the class meeting.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time, provided I give you fair and ample warning.

Wednesday, January 18th:

Introduction to the course

I. Introduction - What Is Sociology?

Monday, January 23rd:

- “Introduction” and Chapter 1 - “Responding to Chaos: A Brief History of Sociology” (Pp. 1-28) in *Core Concepts*

Wednesday, January 25th:

Sign Up For Discussion Leader Dates

- “The Promise” – C. Wright Mills. Pp 1-6 in *Readings*
- “How History and Sociology Can Help Today’s Families” – Stephanie Coontz, Pp. 7-17 in *Readings*
- “Hernando Washington” – Lisa McIntyre. Pp 18-27 in *Readings*

Monday, January 30th:

Short Response Essay #1 Due

- Chapters 2 and 3 – “The Sociological Eye” and “Science and Fuzzy Objects: Specialization in Sociology”, Pp 29-48 in *Core Concepts*

II. Conducting Social Research

Wednesday, February 1st:

- Chapters 4 and 5 – “Who’s Afraid of Sociology” and “The Vocabulary of Science”, Pp 49-79 in *Core Concepts*

Monday, February 6th:

- Chapter 6 – “Doing Social Research”, Pp 80-99 in *Core Concepts*
- “Finding Out How the Social World Works” – Michael Schwalbe, BLACKBOARD

Wednesday, February 8th:

Short Response Essay #2 due

- “Men as Success Objects and Women as Sex Objects: A Study of Personal Advertisements” – Simon Davis. Pp 28-34 in *Readings*.
- “Miscounting Race: Explaining Whites’ Misperceptions of Racial Group Size” – Charles A. Gallagher. Pp 35-48 in *Readings*
- “Not Our Kind of Girl” – Elaine Bell Kaplan, BLACKBOARD

Monday, February 13th:

- “Doing the Right Thing: Ethics in Research” – Lisa J. McIntyre. Pp 49-58 in *Readings*
- “If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably” – Philip Meyer. Pp 59-70 in *Readings*

III. Culture

Wednesday, February 15th:

Short Response Essay #3 due

- Chapter 7 – “Culture”, Pp 100-121 in *Core Concepts*
- “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema” – Horace Miner. Pp 77-81 in *Readings*

Monday, February 20th:

- “Queer Customs” – Clyde Kluckhohn. Pp 71-76 in *Readings*
- “Act Your Age” – Cheryl Laz, Pp 82-92 in *Readings*
- “The Power and Meaning of ‘Girl Watching’” – Beth A. Quinn, Pp 92-105 in *Readings*
- “Escalating Danger in Contemporary Legends” – Elissa R. Henken, Pp 115-125 in *Readings*

Wednesday, February 22nd:

Short Response Essay #4 due

- “The Code of the Streets” – Elijah Anderson, Pp 106-114 in *Readings*
- “Racism in the English Language” – Robert B. Moore, BLACKBOARD
- “Names, Logos, Mascots, and Flags: The Contradictory Uses of Sports Symbols” – Stanley D. Eitzen, BLACKBOARD

IV. Social Structure

Monday, February 27th:

- Chapter 8 – “Social Structure”, Pp 122-137 in *Core Concepts*
- “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” – Erving Goffman, Pp 126-134 in *Readings*
- “The Not-So-Lonely Crowd: Friendship Groups in Collective Behavior” – Adrian F. Aveni, Pp 135-139 in *Readings*

Wednesday, February 29th:

Short Response Essay #5 due

- “The Pathology of Imprisonment” – Philip G. Zimbardo, Pp 140-144 in *Readings*
- “ ‘Getting’ and ‘Making’ a Tip” – Greta Foff Paules, Pp 145-152 in *Readings*
- “Commanding the Room in Short Skirts: Cheering as the Embodiment of Ideal Girlhood” – Natalie Adams and Pamela Bettis, Pp 153-165 in *Readings*
- “The Rest Room and Equal Opportunity” – Harvey Molotch, Pp 166-169 in *Readings*

Monday, March 5th and Wednesday, March 7th:

Spring Vacation - No Class

V. Socialization and Social Institutions

Monday, March 12th:

Short Response Essay #6 due

- Chapter 10 – “Socialization”, Pp 154-171 in *Core Concepts*
- “ ‘Night to His Day’: The Social Construction of Gender” – Judith Lorber, BLACKBOARD

Wednesday, March 14th:

- “Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities” – Michael Messner, BLACKBOARD
- “Emotional Capital and Professional Socialization: The Case of Mortuary Science Students (and Me)” – Spencer E. Cahill, Pp 191-208 in *Readings*
- “Anybody’s Son Will Do” – Gwynne Dyer, Pp 209-220 in *Readings*

Monday, March 19th:

- Chapter 9 – “Society and Social Institutions”, Pp 138-153 in *Core Concepts*
- “ ‘Tuck in That Shirt!’ Race, Class, Gender, and Discipline in an Urban School” – Edward W. Morris, Pp 170-190 in *Readings*

Wednesday, March 21st:

Short Response Essay #7 due

- “Suspended Identity: Identity Transformation in a Maximum Security Prison” – Thomas J. Schmid and Richard S. Jones, Pp 221-232 in *Readings*
- “How Women Reshape the Prison Guard Role” – Lynn Zimmer, Pp 233-244 in *Readings*
- “Not Just Bodies: Strategies for Desexualizing the Physical Examination of Patients” – Patti A. Giuffre and Christine L. Williams, Pp 245-261 in *Readings*

Monday, March 26th:

Paper #1 Due

- “Families on the Fault Line: America’s Working Class Speaks about Family, the Economy, Race, and Ethnicity” – Lillian Rubin, [BLACKBOARD](#)
- “Cause of Death: Inequality” – Alejandro Reuss, [BLACKBOARD](#)
- “Welfare Reform, Family Hardship, and Women of Color” – Linda Burnham, [BLACKBOARD](#)
- “Five Decades and Three Hundred Sitcoms about Class and Gender” – Richard Butsch, [BLACKBOARD](#)
- “Metaphors Matter: Disaster Myths, Media Frames, and Their Consequences in Hurricane Katrina” – Kathleen Tierney, Christine Bevc, and Erica Kuligowski, [BLACKBOARD](#)

VI. Deviance and Social Control

Wednesday, March 28th:

- Chapter 11 – “Deviance and Social Control”, Pp 172-195 in *Core Concepts*
- “The Normality of Crime” – Emile Durkheim, Pp 262-263 in *Readings*
- “Situational Ethics and College Student Cheating” - Emily E. LaBeff, Robert E. Clark, Valerie J. Haines, and George M. Diekhoff, Pp 302-307 in *Readings*

Monday, April 2nd:

Short Response Essay #8 due

- “The Saints and the Roughnecks” – William J. Chambliss, Pp 264-275 in *Readings*
- “On Being Sane in Insane Places” – D. L. Rosenhan, Pp 276-283 in *Readings*
- “Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape” – Elizabeth A. Armstrong, Laura Hamilton, and Brian Sweeney, Pp 284-301 in *Readings*
- “Denying the Guilty Mind: Accounting for Involvement in White-Collar Crime” – Michael L. Benson, Pp 308-316 in *Readings*

VII. Stratification and Inequality

Wednesday, April 4th:

- Chapter 12 – “Stratification and Inequality”, Pp 172-195 in *Core Concepts*
- “The Land of Opportunity” – James Lowen, Pp 317-326 in *Readings*

Monday, April 9th:

Easter Monday – No Class

Wednesday, April 11th:

Short Response Essay #9 due

- Chapter 13 – “Inequality and Achievement: Social Class”, Pp 214-237 in *Core Concepts*
- “Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America” – Barbara Ehrenreich, Pp 327-344 in *Readings*

Monday, April 16th:

Patriot's Day – No Class

Wednesday, April 18th:

- “The Job Ghetto” – Katherine Newman and Chauncy Lennon, Pp 345-347 in *Readings*
- “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible” – Gregory Mantsios, BLACKBOARD
- “Who Rules America? The Corporate Community and the Upper Class” – G. William Domhoff, BLACKBOARD
- “Capitalism Hits the Fan” – Rick Wolff, BLACKBOARD
- “Pity the Billionaire: The Hard Times Swindle and the Unlikely Comeback of the Right” – Thomas Frank, BLACKBOARD

Monday, April 23rd:

Short Response Essay #10 due

- Chapter 14 – “Inequality and Ascription: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender”, Pp 238-262 in *Core Concepts*
- “Racism” – Joe R. Feagin, Pp 348-361 in *Readings*
- “Doubly Divided: The Racial Wealth Gap” –Meizhu Lui, BLACKBOARD

Wednesday, April 25th:

- “ ‘Race Doesn’t Matter, But...’ The Effect of Race on College Professors’ Experiences and Emotion Management in the Undergraduate College Classroom” – Roxanna Harlow, Pp 362-379 in *Readings*
- “Confessions of a Nice Negro, or Why I Shaved My Head” – Robin D.G. Kelley, Pp 380-387 in *Readings*
- “The Model Minority Myth: Asian Americans Confront Growing Backlash” – Yin Ling Leung, Pp 388-392 in *Readings*
- “Tales Out of Medical School” – Adriane Fugh-Berman, M.D., Pp 393-396 in *Readings*

Monday, April 30th:

PAPER #2 Due

- “Afterword: The Sociological Eye and Its Blinders” – Randall Collins, Pp 397-403 in *Readings*
- “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection” – Patricia Hill Collins, BLACKBOARD
- “Dismantling Environmental Racism in the USA” – Robert D. Bullard, BLACKBOARD
- “Community Building: Steps Toward a Good Society” – Amitai Etzioni, BLACKBOARD
- “What Can We Do? Becoming Part of the Solution” – Allan G. Johnson, BLACKBOARD

Wednesday, May 2nd:

Final Exam Review and Wrap Up

Saturday May 12th, 9:00am – FINAL EXAM