INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY
SC 001.05
BOSTON COLLEGE
Spring 2013

Fatima Sattar
Phone: 617-552-4130
Email: sattarf@bc.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30PM-3:30PM and by appointment.
Office: McGuinn Hall 410B Mailbox # 47
Class meeting times and location: T/TH 12PM-1:15PM in Campion 235

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology could be defined as the scientific study of human society, ranging from the smallest of social interactions to the functioning of global society. This course is designed to introduce you to the study, theory, and methods of sociology. As humans, we are inherently social creatures and thus any aspect of our lives can be examined through sociological investigation. In this course we will examine connections between the individual and society, structures of power, social institutions, and social change.

As a Boston College core course, Introductory Sociology will also incorporate the following elements and objectives:

1) **An exploration of perennial questions of human existence**, such as: What is society, and what is the individual’s place within it? To what extent are we free agents and to what extent are our choices, behaviors, and preferences determined and influenced by society? How can sociology inform our understanding of how we and others affect, and are affected by, social institutions and structures? Why do some groups in society have more power than others, and how can we resist what is unjust and bring about social change?

2) **Attention to cultural diversity.** In this course we will consider in depth how race, class, gender, sexuality and other dimensions of human diversity contribute both to the individual’s experience within society and to the organization and characteristics of the society itself. As we will be considering perspectives that may not be familiar to you and will be discussing sensitive subject matter, I ask that you always treat your fellow classmates with respect and compassion, focusing your critical comments on students’ arguments—never on the students themselves.

3) **A historical perspective.** While much of sociology consists of the study of contemporary issues, it is also critical to understand how we got to where we are today. Sociological thought and theories, as in other disciplines, have evolved over time and will continue to do so. Thus, we will consider both how society has changed over time and where it might be headed in the future, as well as the history and development of the sociological discipline itself.
4) **An introduction to methodologies of the field.** In the beginning of the semester we will learn about some of the most common methodologies used in sociology. Throughout the course, as we read various sociological publications, we will consider which methods the researchers have employed and why.

5) **A strong writing component.** College is a great opportunity to develop and improve your writing skills. Good writing is critical in all academic disciplines and written assignments will be an essential component of this class. On your assignments, I will aim to provide you with feedback that will help you improve the structure, clarity, and impact of your arguments.

6) **A contribution to the development of a personal philosophy.** One of the central aims of this course is to challenge you to think more critically about your position in society—how your background, race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, health, and so on influence your goals, beliefs, experiences, and interactions with both other individuals and social institutions. In other words, I will ask you to draw on C. Wright Mills by asking, what are the links between the “personal” and the “public”? In answering these and other questions, you will often be asked to question fundamental and “common sense” assumptions. You may find yourself developing a more nuanced way of thinking about your position in society, as well as a more complex understanding of the functioning of societies and the potential of individuals to make substantial and lasting changes within them.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**


*Note: All required course materials can be purchased at the BC bookstore, and they are on course reserves at the O’Neill library.*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:**

15% Participation, Oral Presentations and Attendance
10% Quizzes (unannounced)
20% Sociological Autobiography
25% Midterm Research Paper
30% Final Exam
DEFINITION OF LETTER GRADES
A=95; A- = 90; B+ = 88; B = 85; B- = 80; C+ = 78; C = 75; C- = 70; D+ = 68; D = 65;
D- = 60; F = 59 and below

Attendance
Students are required to attend and participate in every class. Unexcused absences will result in a
deduction of one’s participation grade. Students who, for any reason, miss at least 1/3 of class
meetings (8 or more absences) will receive an automatic failure. If you believe that you will miss
8 or more classes for any reason, you should choose a different class.

Class Discussion
The class format is lecture and discussion based. Students should prepare for class discussion by
carefully reading and outlining the main arguments in the assigned readings before coming to
class. Additionally, students can answer the questions in Sternheimer’s text at the end of the
chapters under the “Talk About It” and “Write About It” sections. Class participation
encompasses attendance and quality of interaction with the class. High quality participation
includes listening carefully and responding thoughtfully and respectfully to others’ ideas, as well
as expressing your own ideas and/or questions about course materials in class.

Oral Presentations
Students are required to do TWO oral presentations on the reading assignments throughout the
term. The presentation should be 5-7 minutes and include a brief summary and critical
assessment of the readings. Students should come up with two discussion questions to lead class
discussion and email them to me by midnight the day before you are presenting. Readings will
be divided up during the first week of the term. To prepare for the discussion presentations,
students can answer the following questions:
1) What are the main arguments in each reading and what support or evidence is given
for the author’s claims? Do you find them strong or weak?
2) What are the new theories or concepts discussed by the author(s)? Can you apply
these theories or concepts to current events or to your own life and history?
3) How can sociology inform our understanding of how we and others affect, and are
affected by, social institutions and structures?

Quizzes
There will be several unannounced quizzes throughout the semester covering any of the course
readings assigned up until the day of the quiz.

Writing Assignments – Guidelines & Grading Criteria
There are several writing assignments throughout the semester. All papers are to be submitted at
the BEGINNING of the class day on which they are due. Anything handed in after the start of
class is considered to be one day late. Papers will be accepted late, but they drop one letter grade
for each day that they are late. Students should carefully write AND rewrite essays before
handing them in to the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to ask questions if the
assignment’s expectations are not understood. No re-writes are given. Since you are learning to
write academic papers, your grade will reflect your use of appropriate grammar, style, and
organization. You will also need to use proper citation and quotation practices, using the format described in *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, Chapter 4 (O'Neill Library reserve). Most importantly, while you are required, on written assignments, to *show familiarity* with readings assigned for this class, you must do so in ways that properly acknowledge ideas and phrasing that did not originate with you. Proper acknowledgement that avoids plagiarism requires you either to (1) substantially rephrase and rewrite arguments obtained from others, or (2) directly quote from your source. In the first cases, you should provide the author and date in the text (e.g., Smith, 2004). In the second case, you should enclose the borrowed material in quotation marks *and* provide author, date, and page number in the text (e.g., Smith, 2004, p. 10). It is necessary to acknowledge not only published documents, but also material appearing on web sites and in unpublished sources.

**SOCIOCIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY ESSAY – *DUE FEB. 14***

(3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12 point font)

“Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.... No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey.... The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society.... For that imagination is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another— from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessments of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry. It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self— and to see the relations between the two.” -- C. Wright Mills.

Write an autobiographical essay describing the intersection between your biography and history using your “sociological imagination” as discussed in C. Wright Mills’ essay “The Promise” (See Sternheimer text, p. 3-6). What sociological factors have shaped your life so far? Specifically think about your background, race, ethnicity, class, economic status, gender or sexual orientation. How have any of these factors or the intersection of any of them given you advantages or disadvantages throughout life? What factors have shaped your parents’ lives, and how have those impacted your life? (To begin with, you may want to think about the privileges associated with attending a prestigious university). Keep your essay focused to a few key events or moments in your life. Use at least THREE sociological concepts, ideas or definitions from course materials to explain specifically how they apply to your life or help your understand it sociologically. Be sure to use proper citations.

**MIDTERM RESEARCH PAPER – *DUE MAR. 19***

**ETHNOGRAPHY** (5 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12 point font)

Ethnography or participant-observation is a social science methodology researchers use to study people as they go about their everyday lives. The ethnographer writes detailed field notes about what he/she observes and learns about the social, physical and emotional text of a social space, while participating in the daily life of people. Become an ethnographer for a day *or at least 4-5 hours* and immerse yourself in a social situation of your choice! (In the past, students have chosen to analyze the behavior of shoppers in various stores e.g. Victoria’s Secret, of commuters on public transportation, of worshippers at a Pentecostal church service, of diners at a Hooters
restaurant, of doctors and patients in a hospital emergency room, and of teenagers in a movie theater ticket line.)

GUIDELINES:

- Write a short ethnography describing your findings and analyze them sociologically.
- What kinds of things are “going on” in this situation?
- Be sure to describe, in detail, behaviors taking place between all participants (central or marginal) in the situation observed. Who are your central and marginal participants? Why do you classify them this way?
- Are your findings different from what participants might say is going on, if you asked? Discuss the possible meaning(s) of the social interaction from the point of view of the actors. What do the actors think is “going on here”? What actions or circumstances sustain this definition of the situation? Are some things being accomplished that most people involved wouldn’t see or acknowledge?
- When analyzing your findings think about the not so visible macro-structural factors that impact what happens in a micro-local setting.
- Do your observations tend to confirm or disconfirm the claims of other researchers?
- Use library research to find at least TWO scholarly sources (journal articles/books) that relate, directly or indirectly, to the situation you wish to study. Summarize the sources which provide some sociological background for your observations (i.e., some studies which relate to the situation or the type of situation you will observe).
- When you write you should relate the previous scholarly research findings to your research explaining how it compares to yours and helps you think about your study. (These sources should suggest some things to attend to as you observe, some ways that others have interpreted similar situations, and so on).
- Also you should use FOUR sociological concepts, theories, ideas or terms from course materials to support the analysis of your findings.
- *Students should hand in their field notes (hand written or typed) as well as their typed 5 page research paper.

Remember, you are trying here to discover other “levels of reality” than those that people are necessarily aware of, or willing to admit to, in their everyday activity. For instance, you contribute nothing to sociological understanding of human behavior if you study the interaction of people in a bar and simply conclude that “people come here in order to get drinks.” This is certainly true, but it's not very interesting, and it is also true that many other things will be happening there as well. It is your job to try to find out what some of those things are. It is also your job to compare your observations to those that appear in published research. For this example, you do not have to find studies specifically of behavior in bars, but you might look at studies on gender, for instance, of how people interact with members of the same or opposite sex, or about how people interact differently with those they consider to be attractive than with those they consider unattractive, how people use body language to suggest they are sexually (un)available, and so on. You could then apply that more general research to your particular observations in the bar.

FINAL EXAM - *DUE MAY 7* by 12 NOON: Students will be given take home essay questions two weeks before the final exam due date.
**Make-up Assignments/Exams:** The university requires that make-up exams be given only in exceptional circumstances. They may be negotiated ONLY in the event of an excused absence constituted by: (1) an EMERGENCY, defined as a death in the family or a contagious/incapacitating illness, or (2) an out-of-town sports event for players. In such cases, you will need to produce a note from University Health Services, your dean, or your coach. *If you believe you may have influenza, you are especially encouraged to seek an excused absence as verified by University Health Services.*

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**
Cheating, plagiarism and fabrication of information or citations are considered extremely serious offenses, both by me and by the university, and will result in automatic course failure. As it is your obligation to be fully aware of the Boston College policies on academic honesty, please take a few moments to familiarize yourself with them at www.bc.edu/integrity. Also, here are more extensive explanations of cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

**Cheating** is the fraudulent or dishonest presentation of work. Cheating includes but is not limited to: the use of unauthorized aids in examinations or other academic exercises submitted for evaluation; copying from another student’s work; unauthorized cooperation in completing assignments or during an examination; the use of purchased essays or term 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 or for extensions of deadlines for submitting papers.

**Plagiarism** is the 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.

**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.

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any point during the course.
ASSIGNMENTS
We will discuss the following readings on the days they appear below. Please read them before the class day for which they are listed. Bring readings to class each day because we will refer to them in our discussions.

**Week One – Jan. 15 & 17 – Thinking Sociologically and Doing Sociology**
T: SYLLABUS

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 1 (p. 1-24 Mills, Raskoff, Inniss, Wright & Best)
Duneier: Introduction: p. 3-14

**Week Two – Jan. 22 & 24 – Culture, Consumption and Media**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 2 (p. 25-37 Veblen & Schor)
Duneier: The Book Vendor: p. 17-42

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 2 (p. 38-46 Sternheimer, Sternheimer & Innis)
Duneier: The Magazine Vendors: p. 43-80

**Week Three – Jan. 29 & 31 - Stratification**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 6 (p. 133-156 Perrucci and Wysong, Inniss & Sternheimer)
Duneier: The Men Without Accounts: p. 81-111

TH: Sternheimer: Ch.6 (p. 157-170 Kendall and Raskoff)
Duneier: How Sixth Avenue Became a Sustaining Habitat: p. 115-154

**Week Four – Feb. 5 & 7 – Crime and Deviance**
T: Sternheimer Ch. 5 (p. 105-118 Sternheimer, Wilson and Kelling & Wright)
Duneier: Sidewalk Sleeping: p. 157-172

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 5 (p. 119-132 Parnaby and Sacco & Raskoff)

**Week Five – Feb. 12 & 14 – Gender and Sexuality**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 7 (p. 173-196 West and Zimmerman & Barber)
Duneier: Talking to Women: p. 188-216

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 7 (p. 197-208 Raskoff, Inniss & Raskoff)
Duneier: Accusations: Caveat Vendor? p. 217-228

*SOCIOLGICAL AUTOPIBIOGRAPHY ESSAY DUE*

**Week Six – Feb. 19 & 21 – Race and Ethnicity**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 8 (p. 209-226 Omi and Winant & Inniss)
Duneier: The Space Wars: Competing Legalities: p. 231-252

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 8 (p. 227-228 C. N. Le)
Duneier: A Christmas on Sixth Avenue: p. 253-289
**Week Seven – Feb. 26 & 28 – Race and Ethnic Relations**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 8 (p. 229-242 Waters and Innis)
Duneier: A Scene from Jane Street: p. 293-311

TH: Duneier: Conclusion: p. 312-317
FILM – Duneier and Brown

**Week Eight – Mar. 5 & 7 – SPRING BREAK!!**

**Week Nine – Mar. 12 & 14 – Self and Interaction and the Internet Age**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 3 (p. 47-61 Goffman, Wright & Raskoff)
Agger: Preface, Thanks for Sharing & Texting, Tweeting and Blogging p. 1-19

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 3 (p. 62-81 Loe and Cuttino & Wright)
Agger: Social Media, Internet Pornography & A Non-Pornographic Public Sphere p. 20-50

**Week Ten – Mar. 19 & 21 – Social Institutions**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 9 (p. 243-261 Hochschild, Innis, Ehrenreich & Wright)

*MIDTERM RESEARCH PAPER DUE*

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 9 (p. 262-275 Kozol and C. N. Le)
Sarkisian and Gerstel: p. 12-45

**Week Eleven – Mar. 26 & 28 – Social Policies**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 9 (p. 294-298 Sternheimer)
Sarkisian and Gerstel: Social Policies and Families p. 46-54

**TH: HOLY THURSDAY-NO CLASS**

**Week Twelve – Apr. 2 & 4 – Social Change and Immigration**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 10 (p. 299-322 Alwin, Inniss & Sampson)
Golash-Boza: Introduction p. 1-14

TH: Golash-Boza: Ch. 1 Roots of Immigration to the United States p. 15-44

**Week Thirteen – Apr. 9 & 11 – Immigration, Law & Social Problems**
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 10 (p. 323-328 Raskoff and Sternheimer)
Golash-Boza: Ch. 2 The Department of Homeland Security and the Immigration Enforcement Regime of the Twenty-First Century p. 45-80

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 4 (p. 82-86 Weber)
Golash-Boza: Ch. 3 Racism and the Consequences of U.S. Immigration Policy p. 81-108
Week Fourteen – Apr. 16 & 18 – Community, Organizations, and Social Groups
T: Sternheimer: Ch. 4 (p. 87-98 Inniss & Putnam)
Golash-Boza: Ch. 4 The Impossible Choice…p. 109-138

TH: Sternheimer: Ch. 4 (p. 99-100 Raskoff)
Golash-Boza: Ch. 5 The Immigration Industrial Complex…p. 139-158

Week Fifteen – Apr. 23 & 25 – Social Movements & Human Rights
T: Sternheimer Ch. 4 (p. 101-104 Wright)
Golash-Boza: Conclusion: Immigration Policy and Human Rights p. 159-172
(FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS GIVEN-take home)

TH: Agier: Ch. 1 Introduction p. 1-6 & Ch. 2 Bruised Populations p. 7-38

Week Sixteen – Apr. 30 & May 2 – Forced Migration and Displaced Populations
T: Agier: Ch. 3 The Desert, The Camp, the City p. 39-72

TH: Agier: Ch. 4 The Right to Life & Ch. 5 Conclusion: What Refugees Need is Fame p. 73-104

MAY 7 – *FINAL EXAM DUE* by 12NOON