Introductory Sociology SOCY1001
Boston College-Fall 2015

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“When you give food to the poor, they call you a saint. When you ask why the poor have no food, they call you a communist.” Archbishop Helder Camara

“When studying sociology, or rather doing sociology, as we will engage in it will take a certain amount of “going against the grain” of how our thought patterns habitually work. It will necessitate an “initial derailment of the mind from the tracks of common sense.” (Collins 1985:1) In this course, this book, this journey of ours together, we will try to familiarize ourselves with what we already know, un-learning fundamental assumptions of what society is, how it works, who we are. We will be examining practices in everyday life as well as the practice of everyday life. (de Certeau 1984) We will be working with a sociological koan: WHERE DOES SOCIETY END AND MY SELF BEGIN?” (McGrane 1994:3).

Introduction to the Course
This course will introduce students to sociological ways of seeing, questioning, and analyzing social life and social problems. We will primarily focus on life in the United States- while maintaining an awareness of how the U.S. is connected to the global society. The course is guided by central topics in the field of sociology: the self and interaction, the social construction/deconstruction of reality, social institutions as sites of everyday life, cultural capital and consumption, deviance and social control, activism, social change, and social inequality with a focus on race, class, gender and sexuality. The assignments are interactive and designed to engage students to think creatively and critically, to connect course ideas to their own lived experience, to learn from their peers, and to generate new ways of understanding their self, others, and the world around them.

The Social Science Core
Perennial Questions: Where does society end and my self begin? How is this particular society structured? What unites and divides people? How do societies change?

Historical Perspective: Historical specificity is central to this class. The course is built upon what C. Wright Mills (1959) called the “sociological imagination”: a way of thinking about biography as shaped by history. The sociological imagination allows us to connect private troubles with broader public issues in particular historical moments.

Writing Component: You will have frequent opportunities to practice writing in this class. These are spaces for you to develop your critical thinking and written communication skills.
Creating a Personal Philosophy: A central question to the course, *where does society end and my self begin*, will challenge you to critically examine your self in relationship to society. This examination includes questioning: how individual, interactional, and institutional levels of society shape your identity and how you interact with the world, how you benefit from and/or are oppressed by your social location, your ideas about social justice and freedom, and your vision for yourself and society in the future.

*Cultural Diversity:* We will focus on how differences such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, and sexuality shape our personal and collective positions in the social world.

*Methodology:* We will examine how sociologists as social scientists study and report on societies. This class will challenge you to think about how knowledge is created, validated, and circulated in society.

**Expectations & Evaluation**

“I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand.” (Old Proverb)

1. This is a reading and participation intensive course. Readings are due on the day they are listed in the syllabus. Classroom participation is 15% of your final grade, and includes attendance, class discussion and activities, and the sociology-talks final.

2. Any one who disrupts the integrity of the class environment – for example through in-class texting, facebook or other non-note-taking computer use, or consistently coming late – will be asked to leave the class for the day, and this will negatively impact your participation grade.

3. Any one who engages in plagiarism – presenting someone else’s written work as your own – will get zero points for the assignment and the appropriate Dean will be notified in accordance with the rules set forth by Boston College. Boston College’s guidelines for academic integrity are on the following website: https://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html

**Assessments**

In addition to in-class activities, there are 6 short papers and a final project.

6 Writing Assignments: Exploriments & Synthesis Papers (10pts each) 60%
Final Project (25pts) 25%
Class Participation (15pts) 15%

**Paper Submission**

All papers are to be turned in *as a hard copy in class on the day they are due*. Papers submitted after the scheduled class when they are due will be considered late and will lose a letter grade a day. Extensions on assignments will only be given in exceptional circumstances with documentation from a coach, doctor or dean.
Grade Scale
A 93-100    A- 90-92
B+ 87-89    B 83-86    B- 80-82
C+ 77-79    C 73-76    C- 70-72
D+ 67-79    D 63-66    D- 60-62
F <60

Email Policy
Visit the Canvas page for announcements, grades, course materials, a copy of the syllabus, etc. I will not respond to an email if the answer is on canvas. I will respond to emails within 7 days, but your best and guaranteed way to connect with me is in-person directly before or after class, or during office hours. If you are unable to make it to office hours, see me in class about scheduling an appointment.

The Classroom as a Safe Space/Ally
This classroom is a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer and questioning students.

Disability Statement
Boston College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and integrated access for students with disabilities to all available academic, social, and recreational programs and activities. Appropriate support and referral services are provided by the Disability Services Office, which serves students with hearing, visual, mobility, medical, and psychiatric disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. If you are unsure whether or not Disability Services are appropriate for your needs, please make an appointment with Disability Services for a consultation.

Required Texts

These books are available: at the campus bookstore, various on-line retailers (rental options and used copies available), and on 2-hour reserve at O’Neill Library. If you need support to buy books, please contact the Montserrat Coalition: Brock House at 78 College Road, 617-552-8865, email: Paula Dias at paula.dias@bc.edu.

All other readings are on Canvas under the page “Additional Readings”.

Course Schedule
Part I- What is Sociology

Week 1- Introduction and The Sociological Imagination

M 8.31.15
First day of Class

W 9.2.15
Ten Lessons 1-The Sociological Imagination
Thirty Readings:
   Reading 1-C. Wright Mills “The Sociological Imagination”
   Reading 2-Peter L. Berger “Invitation to Sociology”

F 9.4.15
Canvas
   • McGrane p 3-12
   • Bell Chapter 7: Wisdom and Knowledge
   • Horace Miner “Body Rituals among the Nacirema”

Week 2- The Sociological Imagination and Social Research

M 9.7.15 Labor Day- No Class

W 9.9.15
Ten Lessons 2-Theory and Methods
Canvas
   • Bell Chapter 2: Grades

F 9.11.15
Thirty Readings
   Reading 4- Emile Durkheim “Suicide: A Study in Sociology”
   Reading 5- Charles Ragin “Constructing Social Research”
   Reading 6- Joel Best “Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists”

Part II- What Unites Us

Week 3, 4, & 5 Socialization, Culture, & Social Institutions

M 9.14.15
Ten lessons 3-Socialization & Culture

W 9.16.15
Thirty Readings
   Reading 7- Howard Becker “Doing Things Together”
   Reading 8- Debra Van Ausdale & Joe Feagin “The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism”
   Reading 9- Juliet Schor “Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture”

F 9.18.15
Exploriment 1 Due
McGrane Ch.3 “Un-TV: You Are What You Watch” p 62-103

M 9.21.15
Ten Lessons 4-Social Institutions
W 9.23.15
Thirty Readings
  Reading 10-Max Weber “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”
  Reading 11-Charles Derber “Corporation Nation”

F 9.25.15
Canvas
  • Michael A. Messner "Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities"
  • Elijah Anderson "The Code of the Streets"

M 9.28.15
Thirty Readings
  Reading 12-Andy Cherlin “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage”
Canvas
  • Arlie Hochschild. (2012). The Second Shift. Chapters 1, 2, & 3 (pg xxiii-33).

W. 9.30.15
Canvas
  • Emile Durkheim “The Functions of Crime"
  • Donald L. Rosenhan "On Being Sane in Insane Places"

F 10.2.15
Exploriment 2 Due
McGrane Ch.2 “Unoccupied and Unemployed: Don't Just Do Something! Stand there! p 13-57

Part III- What Divides Us?
Weeks 3&4- Class & Economic Inequality

M 10.5.15
Ten Lessons 6- Class and Intersectionality
Thirty Readings
  Reading 16-Karl Marx and Frederick Engels “The Communist Manifesto”

W 10.7.15
Canvas
  • Allan Johnson “Why is There Poverty”
  • William Domhoff “Who Rules America” available online at: http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html

F 10.9.15
Canvas
  • Ann Crittenden The Price of Motherhood, Introduction & Chapter 1

M 10.12.15
Columbus Day- No Class

W 10.14.15
Canvas
  • Jay MacLeod Ain’t No Makin’ It, Chapters 1-4

F 10.16.15
Canvas
• Jay MacLeod Ain’t No Makin’ It, Chapters 5-7

Synthesis paper 1 due

Week 8 & 9- Race, Ethnicity & Inequality

M 10.19.15
Canvas
  • Desmond & Emirbayer. “What is Racial Domination”

W 10.21.15
Thirty Readings
  Reading 14- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva “Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States”

Canvas

F 10.23.15
Canvas

M 10.26.15
Canvas
  • M. Alexander. 2010. The New Jim Crow, p. 31-57

W 10.28.15
Canvas
  • Oliver & Shapiro “Wealth and Racial Inequality”
  • Chen “Asians Too Smart for Their Own Good” NYT

F 10.30.15
Synthesis paper 2 due
Canvas
  • Bell Hooks Black Looks: Race and Representation Ch. 4 “Selling Hot Pussy”
  • Butler "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia"

Week 10&11- Gender, Sexuality & Inequality

M 11.2.15
Ten lessons 7-Gender and Intersectionality
Thirty Readings
  Reading 19-West & Zimmerman “Doing Gender”
  Reading 20-Patricia Hill Collins “Black Feminist Thought”

W 11.4.15
Canvas
  • Anne Fausto-Sterling “The Five Sexes Revisited”

F 11.6.15
Canvas
• Diane Richardson “Locating Sexualities: From Here to Normality”

M 11.9.15
Canvas

W 11.11.15
Canvas

F 11.13.15
Canvas
• Michael S. Kimmel “Theorizing Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the construction of Gender Identity”.

*Synthesis paper 3 due*

M 11.16.15
*Exploriment 3 Due*
McGrane Ch. 5 “The Looking Glass Self: From the Familiar Stranger to the Empty Mirror” p.104-130
Canvas (read after you do the exploriment)
• Beverly Daniel Tatum “The complexity of Identity “who am I?” from *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race.*

Part IV- Global Dynamics and Social Change
Week 12- Global Political Economy
W 11.18.15
Ten Lessons 9-Global Dynamics
Thirty Readings
  Reading 24- Immanuel Wallerstein “The Modern World System”
F 11.20.15
Canvas

M 11.23.25
Thirty Readings
Canvas
• “Growing Clamor About Inequities of Climate Crisis” NYT 2013

W 11.25.15 & F 11.27.15
Thanksgiving Break- No Class

Week 13 &14- Social Change and Social Movements
M 11.30.15
Ten Lessons 8- Forces of Social Change
Thirty Readings
  Reading 22- Bill Gamson “Strategy of Social Protest”
W 12.2.15
Thirty Readings
  Reading 24- Doug McAdam “Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970”

Canvas

F 12.4.15
In Class Movie: The Garden (80min)

M 12.7.15
Finish The Garden

W 12.9.15-Last Day of Class
Final Project Due
Sociology-Talks competition

Assignments

Exploriments
Adapted from Bernard McGrane’s (1994) Un-TV and the 10 MPH Car. Exploriments are experiments in exploring socialization through de-socialization. They are an active practice of learning to see the taken-for-granted social construction of everyday life. The instructions will seem strange, and you may find that doing the exploriments is uncomfortable- that is the point.

For each exploriment:
1) Read the assigned pages from the syllabus until you get to the directions for the activity.
2) Read the directions (THEN stop reading) and DO the activity, follow directions precisely.
3) Observe your experiences during the activity, and then immediately write up what you experienced. What did you do, what happened, how did you feel, think etc.? (around 200 words)
4) After you do the write up, read the rest of assigned pages. Then write a sociological analysis of the experience that includes (around 500-600 words):
   • what did the experience reveal to you about yourself and the social world?
   • how does it connect to course readings and discussion?
*Your paper should include both sections as described above and be single-spaced, 12 point font, and not exceed two pages.

Due dates
9.18.15 Exploriment 1- McGrane Ch.3 Un-TV: You Are What You Watch
10.2.15 Exploriment 2- McGrane Ch.2 Unoccupied Unemployed: Don't Just Do Something! Stand There!
11.16.15 Exploriment 3- McGrane Ch. 5 The Looking Glass Self: From the Familiar Stranger to The Empty Mirror

Synthesis Papers
The synthesis papers should be single-spaced, 12 point font, and no longer than two pages. They must include the following two sections:

**Part One:** What are the **key** concepts, arguments, ideas and/or themes from this section of the course? How do the different readings fit together? (around 500-600 words)

**Part Two:** Thoughtfully relate the readings and class discussion from this section to a personal experience or current event. You may focus in-depth on one reading for this section or multiple readings. (around 200 words)

**F 10.16.15** Synthesis paper 1- Class & Economic Inequality

**F 10.30.15** Synthesis paper 2- Race, Ethnicity & Inequality

**F 11.13.15** Synthesis paper 3- Gender, Sexuality & Inequality

**Final Project due Wednesday 12.9.15**

Do any one of the following four assignments

**Assignment 1- Visual Sociology Project**

Depict the sociological concepts from the course in photographs and/or print media collage. Each major theme from the course should be depicted in photos/images with a minimum of 3 images for each of the 13 weeks of the class for a total of 39 images (see below). Each image should reflect a DIFFERENT idea. For each image, explain the sociological phenomena that is depicted (with citations) and illustrate your understanding of its meaning (around 85 words for each narrative). I suggest you do this assignment over the course of the semester. You must take all the photos and create all the collages yourself - and they must be taken/created for this assignment. The collages must be multiple media images brought together- not just a single photo or drawing. The final collection can be organized in a blog or a hard copy format.

A minimum of 3 images, for any 3 different concepts/ideas/themes, from each of the following weeks, for a total of 39 images:

- Week 1- Introduction and The Sociological Imagination
- Week 2- The Sociological Imagination and Social Research
- Week 3-5 Socialization, Culture, & The Self and Social Institutions
- Week 6 & 7- Class & Economic Inequality
- Week 8 & 9- Race, Ethnicity & Inequality
- Week 10&11- Gender, Sexuality & Inequality
- Week 12- Global Political Economy
- Week 13- Social Movements

**Assignment 2- Social Action Research Paper** (around 2500 words)

Identify a social problem that you want to address and write a paper where you do the following:

1) Describe the social problem, using scholarly research to justify your claims
2) Describe the way the mainstream press defines the problem using 4 news sources (major newspaper or major magazine articles). To what extend do they discuss it? How do they define it? Do they propose solutions? What do their solutions reflect about how they understand the root of the problem?
3) Describe how sociologists define and explain the problem and their solutions- using class materials and 4 additional academic sources (peer-reviewed journal articles or books).
4) Describe how activists define the problem, the solutions they are seeking, and their methods for achieving them (through analyzing websites, zines, other activist materials or interviews with activists themselves). Do you think their approach is useful, why or why not?
5) Are there differences between the mainstream media, scholarly and activist perspective on the problem? How do you sociologically account for these differences?
5) How has your perspective on the topic changed through your learning in this class?
6) What can be done at BC about it?
7) What can you (will you) personally/individually do about it?

Assignment 3- Historical Sociological Autobiography (around 2500 words)
This assignment was adapted from Andrew Austin’s historical timeline project (2011). The first part of this assignment is a historical timeline of three generations, starting roughly 50 years back from the present date. Create a timeline with a horizontal line across a page spanning these dates. Above the line mark significant social, cultural, economic, & political trends and events in chronological order. Below the line mark significant events and transitions from your family’s life (grandparents to your present life), in chronological order. To do this successfully you will have to talk to members of your family and consult historical family documents, AND historical data sources (Howard Zinn’s “A People’s History of the United States”, US census bureau data, historical sociology books/journals). When finished the timeline should convey the connection between your family history/your life, and the social historical context in which it unfolded.

After creating the timeline, you will write an essay that builds on the historical context of your life and develops a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between your self and society. This is often referred to as a sociological autobiography. The first part of the paper should explain in essay form the connections between the historical context and the way your family history unfolded (use at least 4 outside academic sources: peer-reviewed historical sociology journal articles or books). After laying the historical roots of who you are, you will address the major social forces we covered in class that construct your particular selfhood today. This must include, but is not limited to the following: race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, place of birth, and religion. Your treatment of these aspects of your identity should show deep critical thought. You should draw on class readings in this section of the essay and be sure to cite the authors appropriately.

Assignment 4- Exploriments in Nature and Technology Paper (around 2500 words)
The second half of McGrane’s book The Un-TV and the 10 MPH Car is a series of exploriments that deal with themes of nature and technology in relation to self and society. This assignment includes reading and doing the exploriments from Chapters 9-14 and writing a comprehensive paper about your experiences in relation to sociological literature on nature, technology and society. This should be written like a term paper- not in the format of the previous exploriment assignments. The paper should have a thesis that is supported by academic literature and your experiences with the exploriments. Since this is not a topic we directly cover in class, you will be responsible for seeking at least 8 outside academic sources- many readings are discussed in McGrane’s text. Another good idea is to look through syllabi of related classes offered at BC, look for keywords: technology, nature, environment, death and dying, and animals.

Sociology-Talks Final Competition
During our last regular class meeting and the finals period, each student will give a 5-minute ted-style talk on her final project. Convince the class of the importance of your topic, of your way of seeing, of what you learned. Try to think creatively about how to engage the audience. This does not have to be a talk; it can be any creative form of 5-minute communication, like slam poetry, a digital media product, or a piece of art. After everyone has presented, the class will nominate fellow peers and vote for the following awards, each earning 3 points extra credit: most interesting topic, most creative solution to a social problem, best use of the sociological imagination, best use of social theory, most compelling delivery.