

SC001-01 --- Introductory Sociology

Spring 2008 - Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
McGuinn 531; Ritchie Lowry & Cheolku Kang

Nature of This Class: This is a special seminar-like introductory class, not the usual large lecture. You should not take this course if you have already taken an Introductory Sociology course (SC001). The class is held to low enrollment to facilitate discussion and interaction, and it will focus upon the development of **research** and **writing** skills dealing with the application of **social theory and concepts** to **social issues and social problems** leading to **policy implications and public policies** (what is known as "public sociology").

Overall Course Content & Requirements: Within the discipline of Sociology, there are two general perspectives — *micro* and *macro*. Micro-sociological perspectives focus upon human interaction and relationships in everyday life, while macro-sociological perspectives look at long-term historical social and cultural trends and processes. Both perspectives are necessary to understand the nature of human society and the human condition. Sociology is also both **humanistic** and **scientific**. We will begin the semester by talking about the history and nature of Sociology as a discipline - what sociologists look at, how they look, and why. We will then spend the first part of the semester reading **Karp** and **Howard**. In addition, you will be receiving frequent class handouts that summarize sociological research and theories. The major requirement of the course will be **3 sequential papers** (approximately 10 pages each) dealing with an important problem, theory, concept or issue using a sociological perspective. The first paper should identify and discuss the issue-theory-problem-etc. The second paper should analyze it, and the third paper should develop a conclusion. This will allow all class participants to develop their own resource list (not just books and papers, but also perhaps off the World Wide Web and Internet) and deal with something of, hopefully, lasting personal interest from a sociological perspective. Early in the semester, you will be asked to describe for the class your research project for the semester (see **Examples** below). After the completion of the first and second papers, you will be asked to present your findings to the class. Therefore, participation in class discussions will be a very important aspect of this course, and you should let us know if you must miss a class for some reason. Attendance will be taken at certain times.

Required & Shared Reading:

David Karp *et al*, **Sociology of Everyday Life** (Waveland, paper).
Eve L. Howard, **Classic Readings in Sociology** (Wadsworth, paper)

Office Hours:

Ritchie Lowry - Mondays, 1:00 to 2:00 pm. and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., or by arrangement in 422 McGuinn (X23346).

Cheolku Kang – to be arranged

Important Dates:

Monday, January 14th - Snow Day; No Class

Wednesday, January 16th – Introduction to course.

Monday, January 21st - Martin Luther King Day; No Class

Wednesday, January 23rd - What is Sociology? What do Sociologists study? Why?

Monday, January 28th – Tentative Title & Description of Term Project Due

Monday, February 25th – First Paper Due

Monday, March 3rd and Wednesday, March 5th – No Classes; Spring Vacation

Monday, March 10th - Report on First Paper in Class

Monday, March 24th - Easter; No Class

Wednesday, April 2nd – Second Paper(s) due

Monday, April 14th - Report on Second Paper in Class

Monday, April 21st – Patriots' Day; No Class

Wednesday, April 30th - Last Class

Thursday, May 1st through Monday, May 5th – Study Days

Wednesday, May 7th – Final Paper(s) due

Topics, Concepts & Issues To Be Discussed

Origins and History of Sociology

Human Behavior as Symbolic Interaction

The Social Construction of Reality

The Sociological Method

Positivism & Humanism

Testing of Hypotheses

Formulating Theory

Popular Myths, Social Scientific Paradigms & "Paradigm Revolutions"

Functions of Popular Myths

Natural, Evil=Evil & Blaming the Victim Myths

Origin and Nature of "Scientific" Paradigms

Major Sociological Paradigms and Opposing Theories and Perspectives

Deviance Paradigm

Criticisms of Deviance: Alternative Theories/Paradigms

Labeling Theory

Disorganization Paradigm

Criticisms of Disorganization

Conflict Theory

Macrosociological Perspective: Functionalism

Criticisms of Functionalism

Radical/Critical Theory

Post-Modernism

Examples of Past & Possible Term Projects:

Abortion versus Adoption

Animal Rights Movement (history, organization, goals, and accomplishments)

Capital Punishment (prevention or retribution?)

Conceptions of Beauty Among Black Americans

Gay and Lesbian Status (treatment by society and consequences)

Genetic Engineering (social and cultural issues)

Gun Ownership and Violence (is there a correlation and why?)

Marijuana Prohibition: Is It Working?

Racial Stereotypes and Prejudice (Black/White, Arab American, Asian, etc.)

Sexism and Racism in Advertising (content analysis and implications)

Study of Body Piercing (what is its meaning?)

The Tattoo Community

War and the Role of the Media (propaganda, news reports, etc.)

Readings in Howard & Karp (Topics Covered)

Wed., Jan. 16th – Howard #1 & #2; Karp #1 (What Is Sociology and Why?)

Wed., Jan. 23th – Howard #4, #6 & #7; Karp #2, #3 & #8 (Symbolic Interaction)

Mon., Feb. 11th – Howard #8 & #9; Karp #9 & #10 (Deviance Theory)

Mon., Mar. 10th – Howard #10, #11 & #12; Karp #4 & #5 (Disorganization Theory)

Mon., Apr. 7th – Howard #5 & #15 (Macrosociology & Functionalism)

Wed., Apr. 14th – Howard #3, #13 & #14; Karp #6, #7 & #11 (Radical/Critical Theory)

You can read these selections in any order that you desire but be prepared to discuss them in the following several classes after the dates indicated above. They will also help you select and design a term project.

Grading of Term Projects:

The term projects will be graded on **three things**:

(1) The way in which concepts and theories from the class and shared readings can be used to analyze the problem/issue you have selected to study.

(2) The quality and originality of your paper(s).

(3) The relevance of the issues discussed to sociological research and theory and the implications for social policy.

Staying in Touch: If you want to send **Ritchie Lowry e-mail** - **GOODMONEY1@aol.com** with a copy to **lowry@bc.edu**. If you have access to the **World Wide Web**, check out Professor Lowry's **Home Page for Socially Concerned Investors, Consumers and Businesspeople** - **<http://www.goodmoney.com/>** He also has a **Personal Web Page** through the B.C. server @ **HYPERLINK** **<http://www2.bc.edu/~lowry>** **<http://www2.bc.edu/~lowry>**