

Introduction to Sociology - SC00105
Noa Milman

Meeting time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00-1:50
Room: O'Neill 253

Office hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:00 & by appointment
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Overview:

Among other topics, we will discuss cultural relativism and the French controversy over the wearing of the veil in public schools, we'll ask whether men are "naturally" more aggressive, what are the different meanings waiters give their tips and why does it matter, and how fashion and culture serve to preserve a stratified class structure. Through a broad overview of sociological themes, the course is designed to enhance your sociological thinking, connect the personal to the social, and allow you to apply sociological concepts and perspectives to today's society. During the semester we will discuss questions of gender, race and class from various sociological perspectives.

The Core Curriculum:

This course examines the human existence in relation to society, with an emphasis on cultural diversity and the different historical notions of society and human existence. We will examine different methodological approaches in the social sciences, with an emphasis on qualitative methods. Students will get a chance to experience and use different sociological methods as part of their group assignment, alongside critical reading and thinking, and a strong writing component that is required for the in-class exams, literature reviews and field notes.

Reading:

Essentials of Sociology, by Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum and Carr. W.W. Norton & Company, second edition, 2008.
Readings for Sociology, edited by Garth Massey. W.W. Norton & Company, sixth edition, 2009.

Both books are available at the BC bookstore. Other readings are available on Course Reserves.

Grading:

Attendance: attendance is required. Each student may have two unexcused absences without penalty. Each unexcused absence after two results in a one-third lowering of the final grade. For example, if you have three 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.

Participation: the class is highly participatory. We'll have class discussions, exercises, group activities and presentations. Your participation is crucial for the success of the class and will affect your final grade.

Reading: you are responsible for doing all the readings BEFORE each class. Class discussions are based on the reading, and you'll be asked to show knowledge of the readings. Occasionally I will hold unannounced quizzes on the reading material.

Grade composition:

Participation: 15%

Quizzes: 15%

Midterm exam: 25%

Presentation: 20%

Final exam: 25%

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>

Requirements:

1. Midterm exam – in class, 10/23/09

2. Group presentations:

You will be divided in groups of 4-5 students (You can compose the group yourself or ask me to assign you in a group). Each group will be asked to choose a sociological topic of an interest from the syllabus, and develop a research question in the area of your interest. Next you will need to choose your qualitative research method (observations, interviews, etc.) and identify relevant literature. Once an initial list of resources is composed, you'd need to divide the work between the members of the group, and submit your proposal and work distribution on 9/30/09

Throughout the semester, each member of the group will be asked to send the group 4 literature reviews (at least three of the reviews should be on academic articles), and 4 summaries of his/her field work (summary of observations, interviews, etc.). Note that you must complete at least four literature reviews/field work summaries by midterm date, 10/23/09. On your midterm day you should submit a folder with your proposal and all your groups' literature reviews and field work that you completed by then. In the folder I should be able to find at least 4 pieces of work from each member of the group.

By 11/6/09 you must submit a folder with all of your literature reviews and notes from field work.

After all the group members had read each other's summaries, you should assemble to discuss your findings, conceptualize and contextualize them, theorize, and create a coherent "narrative" for presentation.

Each presentation should be 20 minutes + time for questions. You can design a lecture, PowerPoint presentation, class exercise, class discussion or a combination of any sort. Whichever style you choose, remember that your presentation should clearly state your research question, methods, and findings.

At the day of your presentation bring handouts of your outline and/or presentation slides for the class; and submit the folder with your proposal, all of your field notes and literature reviews, outline of the presentation and/or the slides you used, and a short description of your work distribution.

3. Final Exam – in class, 12/15/09, 12:30PM

I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus with an adequate prior notice.

Date	Section title	Class title	Notes on substance	Readings
Wednesday, 9/9/09	Introduction to sociology and the study of society	Introduction	Course goals, expectations and requirements.	
Friday, 9/11/09		What is sociology	Basic definitions of sociology.	Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 1 (P. 3-20) Readings for Sociology Chapter 3 "What makes sociology different?" by Emile Durkheim.
Monday 9/14/09		What is Sociology cont'		
Wednesday, 9/16/09		The Sociological Imagination		Chapter 2 "The sociological imagination" by C. Wright Mills.
Friday 9/18/09		Sociological frameworks		Readings for Sociology: Chapter 38 "The Foundations of Third World Poverty" by John Isbister Chapter 31 "Uses of the under class in America" by Herbert Gans
Monday 9/21/09		Methodology		Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 1 (P. 20-34) Readings for Sociology Chapter 6 "Telling the truth about damn lies and statistics" by Joel Best Chapter 7 "Racism in research: The case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study" by Allan M. Brandt.

Date	Section title	Class title	Notes on substance	Readings
Wednesday 9/23/09		Methodology cont'	*Submit names of group members and optional research topic(s)	
Friday 9/25/09	Group work			Instructions will be given in class
Monday, 9/28/09	No Class- Yom Kiuppur Work on your group projects			
Wednesday, 9/30/09	Culture and society	Cultural diversity and relativism	* Submit research proposal: group members, sociological field of knowledge, research question, methods, initial literature, initial list of interviewees /observations and work distribution.	Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 2 (P.40-52) Readings for Sociology chapter 10, "A look behind the veil" by Fernea and Fernea Course Reserves "Respecting cultural diversity while promoting universal human rights", P. 313-316, in <u>Women Across Cultures: A Global Perspective</u> , by Shawn M. Burn, second edition, 2005.
Friday, 10/2/09		The nature/ nurture debate		Course Reserves: <u>On Human Nature</u> , by Edward O. Wilson. Chapter 6, Sex (until P. 135). <u>The Lenses of Gender</u> Sandra L. Bem, Chapter 2, P. 6-38 Reading for Sociology: Chapter 41 "Shared Paternity" by Kim McDonald
Monday, 10/5/09	The creation of self and social identity	Introduction to processes of socialization		Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 3 (P. 69-80) Readings for Sociology Chapter 16 "Boyhood, organized sports and the construction of Masculinities" By Michael A. Messner Course Reserves: <u>Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy</u>

Date	Section title	Class title	Notes on substance	Readings
				and Social Theory, by Iris Marion Young. Chapter 8, "Throwing Like a Girl"
Wednesday, 10/7/09		Socialization cont' – gender socialization		
Friday 10/9/09	Social Interaction and Everyday Life	Symbolic interaction theory		Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 2 (P. 39-47) Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 4 Course Reserves: "On Being Sane In Insane Places" by David L. Rosenham
Monday, 10/12/09	Columbus Day, no class			
Wednesday, 10/14/09	Social Interaction and Everyday Life	Symbolic interaction cont'		Readings for Sociology Chapter 34 "Police Accounts of Normal Force" by Jennifer Hunt Chapter 25 "'Getting' and 'making' a tip" by Greta Foff Paules Chapter 13 "On face work" by Erving Goffman
Friday 10/16/09	Social Interaction and Everyday Life	Symbolic interaction cont'		
Monday, 10/19/09	Social interaction - macro	Groups, networks, and organizations		Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 5 (P.119-136, 139-145) Course Reserves: "The Spread of Obesity in a Large Social Network Over 32 Years" by Nicholas Christakis.
Wednesday, 10/21/09	Social interaction - macro	Groups, networks, and organizations cont'		
Friday, 10/23/09	Mid-term examination		<i>* By midterm – submit at least half of all your research materials: literature reviews and / or field notes.</i>	

Date	Section title	Class title	Notes on substance	Readings
Monday, 10/26/09	Conformity and Deviance			Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 6 (p. 153-166 until "victims and perpetrators of crime, 170-172) Readings for sociology Chapter 33 "From Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison" by Lorna Rhodes Course Reserves "The Causes and Consequences of Prison Growth in the United States" by Marc Mauer
Wednesday, 10/28/09	Conformity and Deviance	Cont'		
Friday, 10/30/09	Conformity and Deviance	Cont'		
Monday, 11/2/09	Group work			
Wednesday, 11/4/09	Class and the question of social mobility			Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 7. Readings for Sociology, Chapter 22 "Nickel and Dime" by Barbara Ehrenreich Chapter 30, "From <i>When Work Disappears: the world of the new urban poor</i> " by William Julius Wilson
Friday, 11/6/09	Class and the question of social mobility	Social class cont'	*Submit all of your field work summaries and literature reviews	
Monday, 11/9/09	Class and the question of social mobility	Social class cont'		
Wednesday, 11/11/09	Social Class	Theoretical perspectives		Course Reserves "Manifesto of the Communist party" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Date	Section title	Class title	Notes on substance	Readings
Friday, 11/13/09	Social Class	Theoretical perspectives cont'		
Monday, 11/16/09	Group work			
Wednesday, 11/18/09	Capitals - Social, Cultural, Financial	Capitals and life chances		Course Reserves: "The Forms of Capital", In John Richardson, Ed. <u>Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education</u> . pp. 241-258 Readings for Sociology: Chapter 26 "Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural growth" by Annette Lareau
Friday 11/20/09	Capitals - Social, Cultural, Financial	Capitals and life chances cont'		
Monday, 11/23/09	Race & Ethnicity			Essentials of Sociology, Chapter 10 Readings for Sociology Chapter 21 "Optional Ethnicities: for Whites only?" by Mary c. Waters Chapter 18 "My secret life as a black man" by Anthony Walton
Wednesday, 11/25/09	No Class - Thanksgiving			
Friday 11/27/09	No Class - Thanksgiving			
Monday, 11/30/09	In-class presentations			
Wednesday, 12/2/09	In-class presentations			
Friday, 12/4/09	In-class presentations			

Date	Section title	Class title	Notes on substance	Readings
Monday, 12/7/09	In-class presentations			
Wednesday, 12/9/09	Media and social movements			<p>Readings for Sociology, chapter 48 "Grassroots activism: Mothers of East Los Angeles" by Mary Pardo</p> <p>Course Reserves:</p> <p>"Media Magic: Making Class Invisible" by Gregory Mantsios, from Mapping the Social Landscape. Susan J Ferguson ed.</p> <p>"The French Riots: Rebellion of the Underclass" by Immanuel Wallerstein</p> <p>Commentary No. 174, Dec. 1, 2005 in Fernand Braudel Center website</p>
Friday, 12/11/09	Review and wrap-up	The Sociological Imagination revisited		
Tuesday, 12/15/09 12:30 pm	Final exam			