Introduction to Sociology
Section 1, 10:00-10:50 am MWF, Spring 2005
ARH 120, Grinnell College

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Phone: (641) 269-3330
Office: 111 Carnegie
Office hours: posted weekly outside my office

The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise.
—C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination

Course Description
Welcome to Sociology at Grinnell College. Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies, and how people interact within these contexts. In this course, you will be invited to develop your sociological imagination and refine your ability to appreciate the complexity of social life. We will study everything from working at McDonald’s to selling drugs. Our inquiries will carry us from the streetcorner to the classroom, from the shopping mall to the bedroom. Because sociology is the study of society and social relations, we all have intimate experience as social actors in a variety of contexts. In this class, I will ask you to draw on your own experiences to enrich our studies.

Our course will consist of a mix of small group and large group discussions, short lectures, films, field activities, group presentations, and individual written work. Our readings include a sociological reader, edited by Susan Ferguson, which will usher us through many of the central arenas of sociological study, from classical works to recent studies of social life. We will read two exemplary case studies: first, a study of two groups of boys in Chicago by Jay MacLeod, and second, the devastation of community after a flood in Buffalo Creek by Kai Erikson. These two studies will provide us with models of sociological inquiry, preparing each of you to conduct your own sociological research during the second half of the term. Our course will end with two theories of contemporary social practices. Hochschild uses her study of airline stewardesses to consider how emotions are produced and consumed at work, and Ritzer considers the cultural implications of American consumerism.

I hope our course will be an exciting and challenging introduction to sociological practice. Welcome to the class. I’m glad you’re here.

Objectives
It is my hope that together we will:

1. Become familiar with the questions sociologists ask, the research methods sociologists use to answer their questions and the theories sociologists use to interpret their findings.
2. Refine our ability to situate individual and group behaviors within larger social structures and institutions.
3. Recognize and critically evaluate the forces of social stratification that facilitate and constrain human behavior.
4. Develop your ability to apply a sociological perspective to your own life, hopes, dreams, values and plans.
5. Improve your skills of writing, discussing, listening, and presenting your ideas in an enthusiastic and compelling manner.

**Books & Supplies**

  - Susan J. Ferguson, ed.
  - McGraw Hill
  - New York, 2004

- Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood
  - Jay MacLeod
  - Westview Press
  - Boulder, CO 1987

- Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood
  - Kai T. Erikson
  - Simon and Schuster
  - New York, 1976

- The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling
  - Arlie Russell Hochschild
  - University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983

- Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption
  - George Ritzer
  - Pine Forge Press
  - Thousand Oaks, 1999

**Reading Journal**

--of your choosing, dedicated to this course for notes and observations

**Attendance and Deadlines**

This course requires a high level of student interaction, participation and involvement. I expect you to come to class on time, prepared and ready to discuss. Each class meeting you are expected to have read all the assigned readings and have worked in your journal beforehand, in order to come to class prepared to actively discuss the materials. The course starts promptly at 10:00am; I take attendance at the start of class, so be on time. Everyone gets one “oops” as I call it, one day off from the course while still getting full credit for attendance. More than three unexcused absences will lower your final grade for the course (every additional absence will lower your grade one step, for example from an A- to a B+). When you do need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and an update from a classmate and to contact me regarding your absence.

Your written work needs to be in on time. I rarely allow late work to be handed in, and only if you contact me in advance of the deadline. All written assignments must be printed out and handed in, I do not accept emailed assignments. Whenever possible, please print double-sided. Assignments should either be handed in during class, or to my mailbox in Carnegie 115. After office hours, assignments can be slipped under the door of my office, Carnegie 111.
Contacting Me

I expect to stay in contact with students throughout the term. Please come by during my office hours to discuss course content, your thoughts or concerns about assignments, or to get extra assistance. My office hours are posted weekly outside my office (Carnegie 111). If you cannot attend my office hours, talk to me about scheduling an appointment at a different time or scheduling an email or phone discussion. I am online daily, so email is the fastest way to get in touch with me.

Course Policies

*If you have a physical or learning disability that requires you to make some adaptations to this course, please contact me to discuss arrangements. All conversations will be confidential. For help with disability services, contact Joyce Stern (3702). The Student Affairs Office offers a wealth of resources for all students. Stop in during business hours in the basement of the forum, or during drop-in hours, Friday 1:30-4:30.

Assignments

Participation

Student participation is central to this course. I expect you to come to class with your readings done, with prepared responses and ideas, ready to discuss with your classmates. In addition to your group presentation, I expect students to interact, ask questions, share insights, and push each other’s thinking throughout the term. The participation grade is determined by your level of involvement, both in terms of frequency and quality of your contributions. Your participation grade will reflect how much and how well you contribute to our shared exploration of sociology. If you have any concerns about this portion of the grade, please speak to me early in the term. (10%)

Reading Journal

This course requires a significant amount of writing and discussion. Your reading journal will be your greatest tool for developing your sociological imagination, and coming to class prepared to participate. Please have a notebook dedicated to this course that you can use to make reading, discussion and lecture notes, to keep track of your in-class freewrites and also to record your conclusions during field observations. (not graded, will be reflected in your ability to prepare for exams, formal written assignments and class discussions)

Field Observations

This course is not only about reading and understanding sociological principles and practices, it is also about DOING sociology. Throughout the term, we will be putting learning into practice through field exercises that invite you to activate your sociological imagination by becoming a participant observer. Our activities will be grounds for discussion and interpretation, and will prepare you for your final project. At times, I will ask you to hand in an informal written report of your field observations. (10%)

Panel Presentation

Along with several of your classmates, you will be responsible for leading one class discussion. We will discuss the panel presentation assignment and sign up for dates to present early in the semester. Your group will need to read the assigned readings in advance and meet with me to brainstorm and plan out your presentation. The panel presentation grade will be based on your planning and preparation as demonstrated
during the class period you lead, peer evaluation of the presentation, and the outline or group plan that you hand in to me on the date of your presentation. (10%)

*Reflection Essays* Each of you will combine your knowledge from our readings and discussions with reflections on your own experiences and sociological observations and conclusions in three reflection essays (2-3pg each). For each essay, you will receive detailed directions well in advance. (10% X 3 = 30%)

*Sociological Project* Each of you will design and conduct your own sociological project. The final paper (6-8pg) is due on the last day of class. We will work through the stages of design, study and write-up throughout the term. Your final project can address any sociological question you find interesting, so your reading journal will assist you in developing a topic for study. (20%)

*Exams* Two exams based on weekly readings and discussion, are scheduled throughout the term. If you participate in discussions, take excellent reading notes, and keep up with the readings for the course, you will be prepared for both of these exams. (10% each)

**Grading**

- Participation 10%
- Field Observations 10%
- Panel Presentation 10%
- Reflection Essays 30%
- Midsem Exam 10%
- Sociological Project 20%
- Final Exam 10%

**Grading Distribution**

- 94 and up A
- 90-93 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 84-86 B
- 80-83 B-
- 76-79 C+
- 70-75 C
- 60-69 D
- 59 and below F
A Note on Reading

While reading, you should be seeking to answer the following questions:
1. What is the author’s main point or argument?
2. What theories and research methods does the author use to demonstrate his/her point?
3. What key pieces of evidence are presented in support of the author’s argument?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the particular argument?
5. What questions does this argument raise for you?
6. How does this article or chapter relate to previous discussions, readings or experiences?

A Note on Writing

While what you write is essential, how you present your ideas in writing is also extremely important. The reflection papers will provide you with an opportunity to exercise and strengthen your writing skills. I recommend that you take advantage of the Writing Lab for assistance with your assignments. If you do go to the Writing Lab, acknowledge the assistance of your tutor in your paper. We will work through the stages of the research paper together. You will also have an opportunity to circulate a draft of your final project before handing it in for a grade.

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Supplemental readings are indicated by (supp) and will be provided to you in class.

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>M First Day-Welcome and Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Sociology as Discipline</td>
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<td>1/26</td>
<td>W “What’s College For?” (supp)</td>
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<td>1/28</td>
<td>F C. Wright Mills, “The Promise” MSL 1-6</td>
<td>What is sociology?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>M MacLeod, “Social Immobility in the Land of Opportunity” 3-10</td>
<td>“Doing” Sociology</td>
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<td>Donna Gaines “Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia’s Dead-End Kids” MSL 7-19</td>
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<td>Mary Romero, “An Intersection of Biography and History: My Intellectual Journey” MSL 20-35</td>
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<td>Kaplan, Elaine Bell “Not Our Kind of Girl” MSL 57-65</td>
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2/11  F  MacLeod, “Teenagers in Clarendon Heights: The Hallway Hangers and the Brothers” 25-60 Patricia Adler and Peter Adler “Peer Power: Clique Dynamics among School Children” MSL 173-188


**Group 1 Presents**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>FILM: <em>People Like Us</em></td>
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| 2/25 | F   | MacLeod, “Reproduction Theory Reconsidered” 135-150  
Michael Omi and Howard Winant “Racial Formations in the United States” MSL 380-389  
Jennifer Lee and Frank D. Bean “Beyond Black and White: Remaking Race in America” MSL 390-397  
Lillian B. Rubin “Is This a White Country, or What?” MSL 398-409  
Charlie Le Duff “At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die” MSL 410-420  
Social Inequality: Race |
| 2/28 | M   | MacLeod, “The Hallway Hangers: Dealing in Despair” 155-195  
Philippe Bourgois “In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio” MSL 253-264  
Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro “Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality” MSL 303-315  
Dreams and Aspirations |
| 3/2  | W   | MacLeod “The Brothers: Dreams Deferred” and “Conclusion: Outclassed and Outcast” 196-268  
Reflection Essay #1 DUE  
Cultural Accommodation |
| 3/4  | F   | FILM: *Race, The Power of an Illusion*  
Review for Midsem  
NO CLASS – Midsemester Exam DUE  
NO CLASS – Enjoy your Spring Break  
Social Fragmentation and Deviance |
| 3/7  | M   | Erikson, Introduction and February 26, 1972, 1-50  
Crisis |
| 3/9  | W   | Erikson, Notes on Appalachi and The Mountain Ethos 51-93  
Kathleen M. Blee “Becoming a Racist: Women in Contemporary Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazi Groups” MSL 200-213  
Community |
| 3/11 | F   | Erikson, The Coming of the Coal Camps and Buffalo Creek 94-134  
Stereotypes and Norms |
| 3/14 | M   | Erikson, Looking for Scars, 135-155  
Mark Colvin “Descent into Madness: The New Mexico State Prison Riot” MSL 214-229  
David A. Karp “Illness and Identity” MSL 554-572  
Social |
| 3/16 | W   | Review for Midsem  
NO CLASS – Enjoy your Spring Break  
4/3 |
| 4/4  | M   | FILM *Buffalo Creek*  
9
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<td>Charles Derber “The Wilding of America: Iraq and the War Against Terrorism” MSL 654-664</td>
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<td>W. Erikson, Collective Trauma: Loss of Communality, and Conclusion, 186-260</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Reflection Essay #2 DUE</td>
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<td>Barbara Ehrenreich “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America” MSL 318-331</td>
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<td>William Julius Wilson “When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor” MSL 488-500</td>
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<td>Gregory Mantios “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible” MSL 463-471</td>
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<td>Hochschild, “Exploring the Managed Heart” 3-24</td>
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<td>W. Barbara Ehrenreich “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America” MSL 318-331</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Hochschild, “Feeling as Clue”, and ”Managing Feeling” 24-55</td>
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<td>Robin Leidner “Over the Counter: McDonald’s” MSL 501-516</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>W. Hochschild, “Between the Toe and the Heel: Jobs and Emotional Labor” 137-161</td>
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<td>Social Inequality: Gender</td>
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<td>Barbara Risman “Gender as Structure” MSL 332-341</td>
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<td>Judith Lorber, ‘“Night to His Day’: The Social Construction of Gender” MSL 119-131</td>
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<td>W. Hochschild, “Gender, Status and Feeling” 162-184</td>
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<td>Michael Messner “Boyhood, Organized Sports and the Construction of Masculinities” MSL 132-146</td>
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<td>Christine Williams “The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the ‘Female’ Professions” MSL 342-352</td>
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You have graduated from Intro to Sociology, ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

* My deep appreciation to Chris Hunter, Susan Ferguson, Kent McClelland, Kesho Scott, Paul Draus, and Millian Kang for providing models and assistance in constructing this course.