INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 111.03  Susan J. Ferguson
Spring 2011  Office: Carnegie 112
Room: ARH 102  Office Phone: ext. 3133
Time: MWF 11–11:50 a.m.  Office Hours: 2:30 p.m. M/W
and by appointment

“Tell me the landscape in which you live, and I will tell you who you are.”
— José Ortega y Gasset

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This introductory course provides an overview of sociology as a discipline, including emphases on sociological concepts, methods, perspectives, and areas of substantive concern. At the same time, the sociological orientation of this course should enable you to view the surrounding world in a different light. The familiar (e.g., families, friendships, school, work) and the perhaps unfamiliar (e.g., poverty, mental illness, natural disasters), can be analyzed and understood using sociological perspectives.

This course is organized into five thematic sections. The first section is an introduction to the discipline of sociology and the study of society. This introduction includes an overview of the historical significance of sociology and the development of its subsequent theories and methods. The second section examines the relationships between the individual and society through the processes of socialization, social interaction, language, and group membership. Section Three focuses on culture, social structure, and the need for community. The fourth section investigates some of the major social institutions in society, including the family, religion, education, and the government. The final section examines social stratification and social inequality. In particular, we will discuss how societies stratify individuals and groups based on their social class, gender, race, and ethnicity.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

A. To introduce students to the essential concepts, theories, and methods used in the discipline of sociology to analyze phenomena.

B. To give students an awareness of sociological curricula and the linkage between sociological thought and other substantive areas.

C. To enable students to identify and examine sociologically relevant problems and issues.

D. To encourage critical thinking and writing skills which demonstrate the students' abilities to understand and analyze social issues.

E. To enhance students' understanding and appreciation of the complexity of social life.
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Exams: There will be two exams (a mid-semester exam and a final exam) that will cover prior lecture and reading material. Any additional material provided by assignments, guest speakers, or videos also will be covered on the exams. The final exam is **not** comprehensive. Both exams are already scheduled in the course syllabus and students are expected to take the exams during class time on those days. There will be **no** makeup exams unless you have spoken with me prior to the exam with a valid excuse. **Each exam will count 25% of your final grade.**

B. Assignments: In addition to the two exams, there will be two required outside writing assignments. These assignments are aimed at determining if you are able to apply material learned in class. Each assignment will be relatively short in length, and instructions will be given at least a week prior to when they are due. Assignments should be typed and reflect thoughtful writing skills. **Late assignments, if accepted, will be graded down. Each assignment will count 15% of your final grade.**

C. Discussion Papers: Students will be writing discussion papers in response to the readings on a regular basis. These papers will prepare you for class discussion and give you practice with writing. **These papers will count 10% of your final grade.**

D. Attendance and Participation: Finally, since the spring session is short and your participation encouraged, regular classroom attendance is expected. It has been my experience that irregular or casual attendance results in fragmented understanding and poor performance. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. **If absence occurs, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor and other students in order to make up lost work.** Attendance also is important because many class sessions will involve audio-visual material or group discussions that students will have the opportunity to participate in. **Class participation, including short field work exercises, group work, and attendance will count 10% of your final grade.**

E. Grading Distribution: The grading distribution can be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 and up</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 to 93</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 to 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>84 to 86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 to 83</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>76 to 79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 to 75</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

F. The Writing Lab: Students are strongly encouraged to make appointments with staff in the Writing Lab to discuss rough drafts of papers. **If you use the Writing Lab or any other editor, please acknowledge the person you worked with on your paper.**
IV.  REQUIRED READINGS:  The following books are available in the College Bookstore and on reserve in the Burling Library:


Supplemental Readings:

In addition to the above books, there are required supplemental readings that will be made available in class or placed on E-Reserve in the Burling Library. Please keep up with the syllabus by printing out these E-Reserve readings and reading the assigned articles or chapters prior to the day that topic is discussed. The attached course schedule with reading assignments shows what you are expected to have read each day of class. You should come to class prepared to summarize and discuss each of the assigned articles or chapters. See suggested questions below to help guide your reading. Your participation grade is reflected in your reading preparation and ability to discuss readings in class!

Questions To Answer While Reading:

1).  What is the author's main point or argument?

2).  What theories and research methods does the author use to demonstrate their point?

3).  What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument?

4).  How does this reading contribute to your understanding of sociology?

A Couple of Caveats:

Please note that the professor reserves the right to change the readings on the syllabus as needed to accommodate guest speakers, videos, and class discussions. If changes are made in the syllabus, students will be informed of the required readings and updated schedule.

Students are expected to follow all requirements of the Academic Honesty Policy.

Please also note:  There will be no extra credit work allowed.
COURSE SCHEDULE WITH READING ASSIGNMENTS

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF SOCIETY

Mon. 1/24: **Introduction to Course**

Wed. 1/26: **What is Sociology?**

   Read:


Fri. 1/28: **History of Sociology As a Discipline**

   Read:


Mon. 1/31: **Theory Exercise**  Read handouts on theory

Wed. 2/2: **Research Methodology: How Do Sociologists Conduct Research?**

   Read:


Fri. 2/4: Current Sociological Research

Read:


SECTION II: SOCIETY IN US: THE CREATION OF SELF AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

Mon. 2/7: Socialization and Identity

Read:


Wed. 2/9: Socialization and Gender

Read:


Fri. 2/11: **Socialization in Adulthood**

Read:


Mon. 2/14: **Socialization and the Media**

Read:


Suggested Reading:

Wed. 2/16: **Socialization and Language-Discussion of Derber’s Book**

**Read:**


Fri. 2/18: **Research Day: No Class**

Finish collecting data with group, do data analysis, and work on individual papers.

Mon. 2/21: **Research Presentations and Discussion**

**No Readings:**  **First Assignment Due**

**SECTION III: US IN SOCIETY: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY**

Wed. 2/23: **The Development of Social Structure**

**Read:**


Fri. 2/25: **The Effects of Disasters on Social Structure**


2. Excerpts on Katrina and other disasters.
Mon. 2/28: **The Influence of Culture and History**


Wed. 3/2: **The Importance of Culture in the Construction of Social Life**

Read:


Fri. 3/4: **Coping With Change: The Individual and the Community**

Read:


Mon. 3/7: **Discussion of Buffalo Creek Flood**


Wed. 3/9: **Labeling, Deviance, and Social Control**


Wed. 3/11: **Deviance and Crime, continued**

Read:


Mon. 3/14: **Buffer Day**

To Be Announced

Wed. 3/16: **MID-SEMESTER EXAM**

Fri. 3/18: **Class Cancelled**

Enjoy Spring Break!

**SPRING BREAK:** March 18th to April 4th    HURRAY!!!

**NO CLASSES:** Begin reading MacLeod's book.
SECTION IV: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOCIETY

Mon. 4/4: **The Institution of Medicine**

Read:


Wed. 4/6: **The Family**

Read:


Fri. 4/8: **Religion**

Read:


Mon. 4/11: **Power and Politics**

Read:


Wed. 4/13: **Education**

Read:


Fri. 4/15: **Education, continued**

Read:


Mon. 4/18: **Education, continued**

Read:

Wed. 4/20: **Education, continued**

Read:


Fri. 4/22: **Finish Reading MacLeod and Discussion of MacLeod’s Book**

Read:

1). MacLeod, Jay. 2009. Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood. Ch. 9, pp. 157-197; Ch. 10, pp. 198-240; and Ch. 11, pp. 241-271.

**SECTION V: SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

Mon. 4/25: **Social Inequality and Stereotyping**

Read:


Wed. 4/27: **The Significance of Social Class**

Read:


Fri. 4/29: **The Continuing Significance of Social Class**

Read:


Mon. 5/2: **Gender Stratification**

Read:


Wed. 5/4: **Gender and Institutionalized Sexism**

Read:


Fri. 5/6:  **The Significance of Race**

Read:


Mon. 5/9:  **Race and Institutionalized Racism**

Read:


Wed. 5/11:  **Social Change: What Can We Do?**

Read:


Fri. 5/13:  **Course Summation and Celebration**

Finals Week:  **FINAL EXAM AS SCHEDULED:** Wednesday, May 18th at 2 p.m.