

Introduction to Sociology SOC 2303:001

Class Meetings: MWF 9:00am-9:50am, Lawrence Hall 200

Instructor: Dr. Jen McCormack

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Instructor Office Hours and Location: LH 302; 10:00am-10:50am MW or by appointment



Welcome to Introduction to Sociology

The essence of sociology is the study of human relationships and institutions. In this introductory course, we will survey how humans create their societies, and how society shapes individuals, groups and institutions. Through readings and research, we will analyze power, culture and agency. We will examine the social categories of race, gender, class and citizen; and concepts like deviancy, norms

and performance. This course will introduce sociological inquiry and research methods. And we will ask how those things that are considered natural or “inevitable” are socially constructed and permeable to change.

Course Objectives and Skills

- Acquisition of a sociological perspective on human society: individuals, groups and states.

Assessment: exams, writing responses, small group research projects

- Development of a sociological imagination and critical analysis of data, theory and texts

Assessment: exams, writing responses, small group research projects

- Acquisition of research skills:

- Primary research sources (data collection in group research project)
- Application of social theory
- Written and verbal presentation of original research

Assessment: exams, writing responses, small group research projects

- Analyze meta queries: What is considered “natural” and what is socially constructed? If social life is constructed, what is our responsibility in changing injustices in society? How do we determine agency in society? What is social power?

Class Policy

Sociology is a dynamic discipline and is based on controversial topics—that is human society! We will look at race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, crime, politics, religion, revolution and all the topics your grandmother told you not to talk about in order to make new friends. We won’t always agree and that is what makes a stimulating discussion. However, we owe each other respect to listen and articulate diverse viewpoints.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with

Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832, Telephone Number 432-837-8203.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at any level.

Textbook

The text is available for purchase at the Sul Ross State University Bookstore or online:

Introduction to Sociology by Giddens, Duneuer, Appelbaum and Carr. W.W. Norton & Co., 10th Ed., 2016.

Additional Readings

In addition to the textbook, this course will survey contributions to sociological thought. These readings will allow us to dig deeper in the theories, methods and/or relevant discussions in sociology. All readings are fair game for exams and quizzes, and the content should be utilized in student essays and group projects. **The readings are listed on the schedule and uploaded to the class site on Blackboard.**

Grading

560-600	A
520-559	B
480-519	C
440-479	D
0-439	F



In Class Assignments and Participation (100 points possible): Participation through attendance, preparation and contribution to class discussion is a vital component of this course. Additionally, I will offer in-class assignments, small group break-outs and film viewing guides as ways for you to accumulate points.

You are permitted one unexcused absence with email communication. That is professional courtesy and keeps you organized on what you have missed. After that, your absences will count against your final course grade. *Reminder to athletes: With the current absence policy at SRSU, you have a certain number of absences allowed for scheduled sporting events. This does not include practice, gym time, drug tests, etc. Being in class is a priority for all students. You must communicate with the instructor when you will be away. For anyone who misses class: It is your responsibility to catch up on the work, including: 1) using Blackboard to download lecture PPTs, 2) connecting with your small group and 3) connecting with colleagues who did attend and can help you. You may also schedule a meeting with the instructor or come to office hours to go over concepts from the days you missed.

Reading Questions (10 points each, 100 points total): Answers to the weekly reading questions will be due in writing on Friday of the designated week (the two weeks noted the questions are due on Wednesday to allow Friday as a small group workshop day). These questions will be a way for you to synthesize and stay on top of the readings. Keep organized by using your syllabus schedule. **Discussion questions will be posted to Blackboard in that week's folder by Monday of that week. You may download and type your answers, or you can handwrite them. But they must be turned in on paper by that week's deadline.**

Exams (100 points each, 300* points total; lowest test score dropped): There will be a total of four exams offered in this course. The lowest grade of the four exams will be dropped from your final grade. You can invest on maximum points on the first three in order to drop the final. It's a nice way to reward yourself for a semester of hard work by eliminating the last exam.

Small Group Research Project (50 points): You and members of your small group will design an original research project, asking a sociological question. Using Ch 2 on Sociological Research Methods and the ASA Code of Ethics as your guide, you will compose a research question, conduct background research and devise either a survey, interviews, experiment or archival research project. At the end of the course, you and your group will do an oral presentation on your project. Separately, each of you will write up your own report.

Small Group Research Report (50 points): Each person is responsible for writing their own report on the small group research project. Your report needs to have the following components included:

1. Hypothesis/Research Question- what is your project about, what are you trying to explain
2. Background Literature- cite at least 3 articles/sources that situate your project
3. Details of research project-acquisition, interviews, experiment, etc.; location, number of participants, challenges, etc.
4. Results-what did you find out?
5. Analysis- what does your research mean---link this back to your question and background literature
6. Works Cited Page

Length should be 6-8 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, using in-text citations and a works cited page. You may use any style manual: MLA, APA, Chicago---but be consistent throughout the report.

Schedule

*subject to change at discretion of instructor

Jan 18/Week 1: Introduction to Sociology

Reading: Syllabus; Giddens, et al. Ch 1

Jan 23/Week 2: Sociological Research and Small Group Research Project Workshop

Reading: A) Giddens, et al. Ch2;

B) ASA Code of Ethics

Fri: Reading Question Answers #1 Due in Class

Fri: Small Group Workshop #1 In Class- "Composing a Research Question"

**Email Research Question to group and instructor by 5pm*

Jan 30/Week 3: Culture, Society and Socialization

Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 3-Ch 4

Fri: Reading Question Answers #2 Due in Class

Feb 6/Week 4: Groups, Networks, and Organizations

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 6;

B) “Opinions and Social Pressure” (Asch)

Fri: Reading Question Answers #3 Due in Class

Feb 13/Week 5: Conformity, Deviance and Crime

Mon: Test 1

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 7

B) “Lucifer Effect” (Zimbardo) (*trigger warning: details of Abu Gbraib war crimes*)

Feb 20/Week 6: Stratification, Class, and Inequality

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 8;

B) “Fetishism of Commodities: (Marx)

Fri: Reading Question Answers #4 Due in Class

Fri: Small Group Workshop #2 In Class- “Background Literature Session” Bring your laptops! *Email at least three sources to group and instructor by 5pm

Feb 27/Week 7: Gender Inequality

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 10;

B) “Towards an Indigenous Jurisprudence of Rape” (Deer)

Fri: Reading Question Answers #5 Due in Class

Mar 6/Week 8: Ethnicity and Race

Mon: Test 2

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 11;

B) “Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real” (Smedley and Smedley)

Fri: Reading Question Answers #6 Due in Class

Mar 13/Week 9: Spring Break

Mar 20/Week 10: The Sociology of the Body: Health, Illness, and Sexuality

Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 18

Wed: Reading Question Answers #7 Due

Fri: Small Group Workshop #3 In Field, *Email instructor progress

Mar 27/Week 11: Government, Political Power and Social Movements

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 13

B) “Military-Industrial Complex” (Eisenhower)

Fri: Reading Question Answers #8 Due in Class

Apr 3/Week 12: Families and Intimate Relationships

Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 15

Film: *Survive: The Amazing True Odyssey of the Paskowitz Family*

Apr 10/Week 13: Education

Mon: Test 3

Readings: A) Giddens, et al. Ch 16;

B) "Against School" (Gatto)

Fri: Reading Question Answers #9 Due in Class

Apr 17/Week 14: Religion

Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 17

Wed: Reading Question Answers #10 Due

Fri: Small Group Workshop #3 In Field, *Email instructor progress

Apr: 24/Week 15:

Mon-Fri: Small Group Presentations

May 1/Week 16:

Mon: Student Papers Due, Final Review

May 8/Finals Week: Final TBA