

**Introduction to Sociology**  
**Online Course**  
SOC 2303:001

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

Instructor: Dr. Jen McCormack

Instructor Email: jennifer.mccormack@sulross.edu; mackormack@gmail.com (use this one only if the SRSU email gives you trouble)

Instructor Office Phone: (432) 837-8161

Instructor Skype: jennymack

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

Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences Telephone: (432)837-8157 *\*You can call this number if you have trouble getting online, etc. You can also email me anytime.*



**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, original research projects

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

Assessment: exams, writing responses, original 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, original 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?

**Special Online Introduction**

Welcome to the online-based offering of this course. Blackboard and email are going to be our virtual class spaces, and **communication is vital** for you to get the most out of this course!

I will be available to meet via Skype, phone, email or in person (SRSU-Alpine) by appointment. If you are in Alpine, you may also come to the office hours listed above, or make an appointment.

In this online delivery, you will work through the same topic areas as the in-person class. There are the same amount of exams, reading response questions, and projects. The major difference (in addition to being in a virtual classroom!) is you will do the research project on your own, not in a small group. And you will participate as a class on weekly discussion boards, both to my prompt and to each other's responses. Working through the lecture PPTs is a good way to organize your week, I highlight which concepts are important, provide multi-media links to elaborate and clarify concepts and give you questions to help you conceptualize the ideas.

You can always email me for clarification. Part of the beauty of an online delivery is flexibility of time and space, one of the challenges is doing the work independently---without the verbal exchange between professor and student, and colleagues.

**For each week, the most effective way to do this class is:**

1. Go through the lecture PPT for that topic area---use the red lined comments and notes under the slides to help elaborate on the concepts.
2. Read the required readings (the listed chapters in Giddens, et al. and the additional readings for that week).
3. Watch the films and/or multimedia links pertaining to that week's topic.
4. Participate in the week's discussion board question on Blackboard.
5. Answer and submit that week's reading questions to the instructor via email.
6. \*If it is an exam week, you will have a set amount of time to do that exam on Blackboard. Be sure to secure a quiet space and time, working internet access and enough time prior to the exam deadline. In other words, don't wait until 2 hours before the exam closes online. \*You can communicate with me via email, call the BASS office or use the online support if you run into issues.
7. \*\*If it is an original research project deadline week, submit that assignment to the professor via email by Fri 5pm CST.

**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. **For the online course, this is essential in both your discussion board responses and in your overall writing.**

**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 Schwartze 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. Obtain the text immediately:

*Introduction to Sociology* by Giddens, Duneuer, Appelbaum and Carr. W.W. Norton & Co., 10<sup>th</sup> 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 and Assignments

### Grading Scale

700-660	A
659-630	B
629-600	C
599-570	D
0-569	F



### Discussion Board (10 points each, 150 points total):

Contribute two comments each week to the Discussion Board on the course Blackboard site. Your first answer should directly respond to the instructor's prompt, and second reply to your colleagues' comments. Comments should be full sentences citing theory, concepts and examples from class materials. Discussion board replies due by Friday 5pm CST. The link to the Discussion Board is located under the "Content" tab.

**Reading Questions (10 points each, 100 points total):** Answers to the weekly reading questions will be due in writing on Friday 5pm CST of the designated week, emailed to the instructor. These questions will be a way for you to synthesize and stay on top of the readings. Keep organized by using your syllabus schedule. Questions will be posted to that week's folder by the Monday of that week.

**Film Viewing or Other Assignments (25 points each, 50+ points total):** There are at least 2 film viewing guides to fill out as you watch the multi-media for those weeks (Deviance and Family weeks). I may add more for additional point accumulation, at my discretion. The guides will be included in that week's folder and should be emailed to the instructor by Friday 5pm CST.

**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 also 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, eliminating the last exam. The exams will be available on Blackboard for a specific amount of time for that week. I will post the testing times for that week---you will have at least a 24hour range in which to take the exam.

**Original Research Project and Report (100):** You 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 will write up your report with the following components:

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.

### **Original Research Project Guide for Web-Based Students:**

Using the different methods detailed in Week 2, you will compose a research question and select a method for data collection. You can use any methods (interviews, survey, ethnography, historical archives, media data), simply pick a method that will help you support your research question. And think about how each methods has pros and cons (detailed in Ch 2 Giddens, et al.).

You may select any topic connected to the areas of study in this course: groups and individuals, socialization, power and conformity, health and sexuality, religion, education, families, etc. Take a general topic area from our book and then look for angle that interests YOU and gives you an idea to do some original investigation---from your dorm, you workplace, your social life, or archival records. The objective is for you to compose an original question and collect NEW data.

For example, you can compare the benefits and challenges of an online course to a life action classroom. To do this, you could do a survey of other students and their thoughts to support your question. Or you could do an ethnography on your own experience by keeping a journal of how you feel every week with the online course. Or you can use historical archives by comparing the statistics of how many SRSU students have done online courses over the years, how many classes are online and what are the testimonies of participants. You would then analyze what this data says in response to your question and the background literature you detail giving your final report a full discussion from question, to place in existing research, to your new data, to how you read the data and your conclusions.

Another example of a project? You can ask a theoretical question on the power of groups: how individuals respond to witnessing a crime versus a group of people? Who will step in and stop the

crime? Who might just watch it happen? And why? Are we more influenced by what are friends are doing in that moment or our own convictions, fear, etc.? For your data, you could use newspaper reports (archive data) to compare how crimes were stopped or not by witnesses who were either individuals or in groups.

From there, you will do a literature search using a search engine like the SRSU Library or Google Scholar to find other projects that either asked similar questions or used similar methods to make their argument. You can compare how those operated versus your own. You may include sources from the additional readings throughout the course, especially if they express an idea you want to support or challenge. For example, if you want to extend the argument that schools are more focused on discipline than knowledge, you could use the Gatto reading in the Education week and add two more sources from your own research. Contact me via email if you have any questions about how to do the project, research the data or compose a question. This is a dynamic process.

### **Original Research deadlines to email professor-**

- 1) Fri. Jan. 27 5pm CST: Research Question and Methods (this can be a preliminary question and can change, but this is to get the ball rolling)
- 2) Fri. Feb. 24 5pm CST: Three Background Literature Sources
- 3) Fri. Mar. 24 5pm CST: Data Collection Progress Report (How is data collection going? What do you have so far?)
- 4) Fri. Apr. 21 5pm CST: Data Collection Progress Report (How is data collection going? What do you have so far?)

### **Schedule**

\*subject to change at discretion of instructor

#### **Jan 18/Week 1: Introduction to Sociology**

Reading: Syllabus; Giddens, et al. Ch 1

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

#### **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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Research Question and Data Collection Method Due 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

#### **Jan 30/Week 3: Culture, Society and Socialization**

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

**Fri: Reading Question Answers #2 Due 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

#### **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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**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*)

**Fri: Film Viewing Guide Due 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Original Research Project “Background Literature”** Three articles you are using to build your project and report are due in citation form via email to instructor, 5pm CST

**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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**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

**Fri: Reading Question Answers #7 Due 5pm CST**

**Fri: Data Collection Progress Report Due \*email instructor progress 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**Apr 3/Week 12: Families and Intimate Relationships**

Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 15

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

**Fri: Film Viewing Guide Due 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**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 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**Apr 17/Week 14: Religion**

Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 17

**Fri: Reading Question Answers #10 Due**

**Fri: Data Collection Progress Report Due \*email instructor progress 5pm CST**

**Fri: Discussion Board Due 5pm CST**

**Apr: 24/Week 15:**

**Fri: Discussion Board Project Sharing Due 5pm CST**

**May 1/Week 16:**

**Mon: Student Papers DUE 5pm CST**

**May 8/Finals Week: Final TBA**