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
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:


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

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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>550-600</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>500-549</td>
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<td>450-499</td>
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1. **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.*
2. **Reading Questions (10 points each, 100 points total):** Answers to the weekly reading questions will be due in writing on Wednesday of the designated week. 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.**

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **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 in APA format. An online source for APA formatting is free from Purdue University at this website: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

**Schedule**
*subject to change at discretion of instructor

**Jan 15/Week 1: Introduction to Sociology**
Reading: Syllabus; Giddens, et al. Ch 1

**Jan 22/Week 2: Sociological Research**
Reading:
A) Giddens, et al. Ch2;
B) ASA Code of Ethics

**Wed: Reading Question Answers #1 Due in Class**
Jan 29/Week 3: Culture, Society and Socialization
Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 3-Ch 4
Wed: Reading Question Answers #2 Due in Class

Feb 5/Week 4: Groups, Networks, and Organizations
Readings:
A) Giddens, et al. Ch 6;
B) “Opinions and Social Pressure” (Asch)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #3 Due in Class
In Class Film Guide: 12 Angry Men

Feb 12/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 Ghraib war crimes)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #4 Due in Class

Feb 19/Week 6: Stratification, Class, and Inequality
Readings:
A) Giddens, et al. Ch 8;
B) “Fetishism of Commodities: (Marx)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #5 Due in Class
Wed: Small Group Workshop In Class

Feb 26/Week 7: Gender Inequality
Readings:
A) Giddens, et al. Ch 10;
B) “Born this Way” (Pang);
C) “Dear Ijeawle” (Adichie)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #6 Due in Class

Mar 5/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);
C) “People who are different are not the problem in America” (Lankford and Scott)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #7 Due in Class
In Class Film Guide: Finding Your Roots Episode

Mar 12-16/Week 9: Spring Break

Mar 19/Week 10: The Sociology of the Body: Health, Illness, and Sexuality
Readings: Giddens, et al. Ch 18
Wed: Reading Question Answers #8 Due
Wed: Small Group Workshop In Class
Mar 26/Week 11: Government, Political Power and Social Movements
Readings:
A) Giddens, et al Ch 13;  
B) “Military-Industrial Complex” (Eisenhower);  
C) “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (King)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #9 Due in Class

Apr 2/Week 12: Families and Intimate Relationships
Readings: Giddens, et al Ch 15
Film: Surfwise: The Amazing True Odyssey of the Paskowitz Family
In Class Film Guide: Surfwise

Apr 9/Week 13: Education
Mon: Test 3
Readings:
A) Giddens, et al Ch 16;  
B) “Against School” (Gatto)
Wed: Reading Question Answers #10 Due in Class

Apr 16/Week 14: Religion
Readings: Giddens, et al Ch 17
Wed: Small Group Workshop In Class

Apr 23/Week 15:
Small Group Presentations

Apr 30/Week 16:
Student Papers Due, Final Review

May 7/Finals Week: Final TBA