

Introduction to Sociology (SOC1101), Online
August 2015 – December 2015

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The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden. Pierre Bourdieu

All investigations of the world happen from within a particular location – an embodied location. Sociology aims to transcend this. Dorothy Smith

One of the key places where sociology should be used is in analyzing ‘the world’ of our times, so that we can be more discerning. To resist the dangers of the world, you have to recognize the distortions and seductions of the world. Os Guinness

The general population doesn’t know what’s happening, and it doesn’t even know that it doesn’t know. Noam Chomsky

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life. Jane Addams

To maintain their power, dominant groups create and maintain a popular system of ‘commonsense’ ideas that support their right to rule. In the United States, hegemonic ideologies concerning race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation are often so pervasive that it is difficult to conceptualize alternatives to them, let alone ways of resisting the social practices that they justify. Patricia Hill Collins

Course Description

This online course provides a survey of the discipline of Sociology: its histories, theories, controversies, and applications. Sociology is the study of societies and the social worlds that individuals inhabit within them; sociologists study human social activities, ranging from ideologies (beliefs, values, etc.), identities (group identifications, cultures, etc.), interactions (social construction of realities, presentations of selves), inequalities (socioeconomic status, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, etc.) and institutions (families, economies and occupations, religions, health, etc.). The discipline of Sociology provides diverse perspectives and methods to understanding social phenomena. In this introductory course, we will explore how social forces shape individuals, and how individuals construct and change social systems. As students, you will be tasked with developing a *sociological imagination*: the capacity to think systematically about how things we experience as *personal* problems are really *social* issues that are widely shared by others born in a similar time and social location as us. As Conley describes, with a sociological imagination, we develop “the ability to connect the most basic, intimate aspects of an individual’s life to seemingly impersonal and remote historical forces” (2013:4). The course text and activities will encourage students to *debunk* their social worlds and experiences.

Learning Objectives

- identify and apply the basic concepts, theories, and insights of sociological perspectives
- develop the sociological imagination
- understand the social construction and maintenance of realities
- recognize the stratified organization of social power, resources, and rewards: who suffers? who benefits? why should we care? what can we do?
- realize the potential for changes in social structures, forces, identities, and more
- debunk the taken-for-granted social phenomena through course activities

Course Text

Conley, Dalton. 2013. *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. ISBN 978-0-393-91299-9

Blackboard

Please take time to familiarize yourself with Blackboard and the course materials that we will utilize this semester. It is important to stay on top of your work in this course. Remember to comprehensively read the instructions for assignments and to submit your work on time. Please look carefully at Blackboard for answers to questions you may have; often, the answer is already included in the materials on Blackboard. If you still have questions, please contact me through email.

Class Format

The class is an independent study course, so students are required to complete the course with limited instructor interaction. Please be aware of all due dates and guidelines. The course is designed in 3 modules on Blackboard, which weekly lessons in each module. The weekly lessons include folders for lectures, readings, videos, and assignments.

Announcements

- Throughout the semester, important reminders and updates will be posted on Blackboard.
- Students are advised to make sure they regularly check for announcements, or make sure they receive an email from Blackboard whenever there is a new announcement.

Student Responsibilities for Online Learning

- The syllabus must be read and reviewed throughout the course.
- Students are responsible for all materials included in the lecture, reading assignments, audiovisual content, videos, and handouts. Not all material will be covered in the online lecture, but may be included in the quizzes and exams.
- Students are encouraged to take notes on the course materials.
- All students are expected to maintain academic integrity and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct.
- If a student requires accommodation for a disability, they should contact the instructor immediately to insure proper action is taken.

Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) Student Learning Outcomes

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln seeks to provide quality education to all of its students. To that end, it has designated certain classes as ACE certified. These classes provide and assess specific learning outcomes. As an ACE class, Introduction to Sociology will facilitate Learning Outcome #6:

Using knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior. This class will:

- Provide opportunities to increase your knowledge of an individual's relationship with society, key sociological theories, prevalent patterns of inequality, and sociological perspectives on primary institutions through lectures, videos, and readings.
- Offer opportunities to acquire knowledge relevant to understanding patterns of human behavior.

ACE learning outcomes in this class will be assessed by:

- quizzes, discussion board participation, reaction/reflection papers, and exams

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarizing are very serious academic offenses. Please be academically honest in this and every course. If a student is caught cheating, the following protocol will be utilized:

1. The student will receive a “0” on the assignment.
2. The incident will be reported to Dr. Julia McQuillan, the Chair of the Sociology Department.
3. The incident will be reported in writing to UNL’s Judicial Affairs.

The Office of Graduate Studies has put together a website to help students better understand plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you are ever unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or if you just want a refresher, please take advantage of this resource, which can be found at:

<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/plagiarism.shtml>

Grade Dispute Policy

If you earn a grade that you believe to be incorrect or unfair and would like me to reconsider it, you will need to submit the following to me within one week of the grade’s post to Blackboard: 1) your graded assignment and 2) a typed letter [12pt Times, single-spaced, 1-inch margins; see example posted on Bb] explaining why you believe the grade you received does not accurately reflect the quality of your work given the requirements of the assignment. I will inform you of my decision within a week of receiving these items. I will not reconsider grades that do not follow this procedure.

Technological Issues

All activity in the course is monitored and recorded by our online campus administrator and can be retrieved in the event of conflict between what has been done and what has been said. If you experience problems with your home computer, the course is available online, so it can be accessed by any computer with an Internet connection. Therefore, if an assignment (quiz, discussion board posting, reaction or reflection paper, or exam) is not submitted properly or late, the instructor reserves the right to consider the assignment as incomplete, requiring a zero for the assignment.

If you need technical help, you can **contact the help desk:** 402 472 3970 (Monday-Friday, 7:30a-7:30p) mysupport@unl.edu

Disabilities

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact us for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, you must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Assessments

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| about me assignment | 10 |
| syllabus exercise | 10 |
| quizzes (13) | 260 |
| discussion board (3) | 90 |
| reaction/reflection papers (2) | 100 |
| exams (3) | 300 |
| total | 770 |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| A+ 96% – 100% | B+ 86% – 89% | C+ 76% – 79% | D+ 66% – 69% |
| A 93% – 95% | B 83% – 85% | C 73% – 75% | D 63% – 65% |
| A- 90% – 92% | B- 80% – 82% | C- 70% – 72% | D- 60% – 62% |
| | | | F below 60% |

percentages will be rounded up, so that 86.5% = 87% while 86.4% = 86%

About Me and Syllabus Exercise

The guidelines for the About Me assignment and the syllabus exercise are posted within the Assignments folder for week 1 in module 1. Both assignments are due by 11:59p on Friday Aug28.

Quizzes

To assess understanding and retention of course materials, there will be a quiz every week on Blackboard over the course material covered that week. The quizzes are due on Sunday nights by 11:59p. Each quiz will have 20 questions/prompts: multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank. The quizzes are meant to help students prepare for exams. Students are permitted four (4) attempts at each quiz, and the highest score will be recorded, provided that the student completed at least one of the quiz attempts prior to the due date. Failure to complete the quiz during the week it is due will result in zero (0) points. Students who complete the quiz late can continue to take the quiz, but they will not receive credit.

Reaction/Reflection Papers

There are five (5) options available for reaction/reflection papers (see the Course Schedule), and students are expected to complete two (2) of the papers; additional papers will not be accepted. Papers must be submitted via the Safe Assign link provided within the Assignments folders (see the Course Schedule) by 11:59p on Friday nights. Late papers are not accepted. If you have trouble with Safe Assign, you may email the paper for proof that the assignment was completed on time. Emailed papers will not be graded, so students must upload the assignment to Safe Assign within two (2) days, i.e. by 11:59p on Sunday nights. Papers must be completed in Microsoft Word; students should include their name and a short title for their reaction/reflection papers at the top of the document. Papers should be three (3) full pages in length; additional materials, such as collected data, do not count toward the page requirement. Students are expected to address each component of the assignment. Reaction/reflection papers must incorporate course materials: concepts, theories, ideas, definitions from covered materials, or more. Papers will be graded on content (the depth and breadth of the course information applied in students' analyses) and form (the clarity of work in terms of grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

Formatting: 3 full pages, 12pt Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, double-spaced (0pt before/after)
Title: First name Last name RP # Example: Lyndie Nader RP 1.docx

Discussion Board Participation

Over the course of the semester, there will be three (3) discussion board assignments, each worth 30pts. Students are required to participate in all three of the discussion board activities. The due dates are listed in the Course Schedule. Students are required to make an original post by 11:59p on Wednesday nights, and to respond to a peer's post by 11:59p on Friday nights of the same week. Prompts for discussion will vary for each assignment and correspond with that week's topics. Find details within the Assignments folder for that week.

Exams

There will be three (3) exams, each worth 100pts, in the following format: 50 multiple choice questions, each worth 2pts. The questions will be drawn from the readings, lectures, quizzes, films, and assignments. Each exam will be proctored at the testing center on campus, or at an alternative testing site. Students who are off-campus need to set up their testing proctor by the end of the 2nd week of classes (by Friday Sep4). Students can find the exams and the procedures for taking proctored exams in the module folders. In rare circumstances, make-up exams are allowed; however, approval must be granted in advance. Since students have one week to complete the exam, consideration will be extremely limited.

There is not a cumulative final exam.

Testing centers: Burnett Testing Center, 127 Burnett Hall, (402) 472-6976
East Campus Testing Center, 218 Biochemistry Hall, (402) 472-7115

Course Schedule

*All assignments are due by 11:59p unless noted otherwise.

MODULE 1 – Using Your Sociological Imagination

| week | date | topic | lectures/readings | assignments |
|------|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Aug24 | The Sociological Imagination | Lectures: 1-3 Text: ch1 Mills, “The Promise” | About Me: Aug28 Syllabus Exercise: Aug28 Quiz 1: Aug30 |
| 2 | Aug31 | Methods / Ethics | Lecture: 4 Text: ch2 Videos: McQuillan; Crawford | Quiz 2: Sep6 |
| 3 | Sep7 | Culture and Media / Socialization | Lectures: 5 and 6 Text: ch3 and ch4 Videos: Secret of the Wild Child; Kids, Sports, and Violence; Interviews with Children about Gender | DB 1 Post: Sep9 DB 1 Response: Sep11 Quiz 3: Sep13 |
| 4 | Sep14 | Groups and Networks | Lecture: 7 Text: ch5 | RP option 1: Sep18 Quiz 4: Sep20 |
| 5 | Sep21 | Social Control and Deviance | Lectures: 8 and 9 Text: ch6 Videos: Kort-Butler; Mexico’s Drug War; Chappelle’s Show | RP option 2: Sep25 Quiz 5: Sep27 |
| 6 | Sep28 | Exam 1 open Sep28 – Oct2 | | final submission of quizzes 1-5: Oct2 |

MODULE 2 – Social Divisions and Inequality

| week | date | topic | lectures/readings | assignments |
|------|-------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 7 | Oct5 | Stratification | Lecture: 10 Text: ch7 | Quiz 6: Oct11 |
| 8 | Oct12 | Social Class / Poverty | Lecture: 11 Text: ch10 Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed” Video: Poor Kids | RP Option 3: Oct16 Quiz 7: Oct18 |
| 9 | Oct19 | Race | Lecture: 12 Text: ch9 McIntosh, “Invisible Knapsack” Videos: What Would You Do?; Institutional Discrimination | DB 2 Post: Oct21 DB 2 Response: Oct23 Quiz 8: Oct25 |
| 10 | Oct26 | Gender and Sexuality | Lectures: 13 and 14 Text: ch8 Videos: Killing Us Softly; Smyth; Gender Stereotypes in Media | RP option 4: Oct30 Quiz 9: Nov1 |
| 11 | Nov2 | Exam 2 open Nov2 – Nov6 | | final submission of quizzes 6-9: Nov6 |

MODULE 3 – Institutions of Society

| week | date | topic | lectures/readings | assignments |
|------|-------|--|--|---|
| 12 | Nov9 | Health | Lecture: 15 Text: ch11 Videos: Goosby; The Fattest Place on Earth | RP option 5: Nov13 Quiz 10: Nov15 |
| 13 | Nov16 | Family | Lecture: 16 Text: ch12 Lareau, “Invisible Inequalities” Video: Steiner | Quiz 11: Nov22 |
| 14 | Nov23 | no assignments this week | | |
| 15 | Nov30 | Capitalism and the Economy / Technology and the Environment | Lectures: 17 and 18 Text: ch14 and ch17 Videos: The Working Poor; Is Walmart Good for America?; Digital Nation | DB 3 post: Dec2 DB 3 response: Dec4 Quiz 12: Dec6 |
| 16 | Dec7 | Education | Lecture: 19 Text: ch13 | Quiz 13: Dec13 |
| 17 | Dec14 | Exam 3 open Dec14 – Dec18 | | final submission of quizzes 10-13: Dec18 |