Sociology 100. Principles: Sociology and Everyday Life

Fall 2001
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1 to 2 p.m., 1210 Chem. Building,
plus one 2-hour section meeting per week

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Class web site: <http://coursetools.ummu.umich.edu/2001/fall/soc/100/012.nsf>

Why did you come to the U. of M.? What do Nikes have to do with sociology? What difference has your race made in your life? your social class? your gender? your sexual orientation? How different are you from Prof. Honeycutt due to the fact that she's (just a bit) older than you -- i.e., what difference does your age make? your "cohort"? How do we (all of us) "socially construct" guidelines for behavior? How aware are we of all the "rules" we follow in our everyday lives? What impact does the media have on what we do? the educational system? 21st-century capitalism? the families we grew up in?

These are some of sociology's questions. Sociology is the systematic study of human behavior, social relationships, and societies. This course will introduce the sociological perspective as a tool for understanding the connections between the individual's everyday life and larger-scale processes and structures within society. We will focus particularly on various explanations for social inequality in the U.S. and empirical research about such inequality. Specifically, we will examine how social class, race & ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. shape our individual lives, our interactions with others, our social institutions, and our society as a whole.

The "sociological perspective"

A primary goal of the course is to convey a sense of what a "sociological perspective" is. One main theme of the course -- and of "thinking sociologically" -- is that individual behavior is shaped by a great number of social forces and social structures, including norms, laws, cultural values, economic systems, various hierarchies (e.g., those based on social class, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.), and others, many of which are "invisible" to us. In this class we will attempt to make these "invisible forces and structures" visible: to understand them by bringing them out into the open, looking at them closely, and studying how they have an impact on our lives.

As you will learn, the sociological approach differs dramatically from individualism, a way of thinking that is profoundly embedded in American culture and society -- and a way of thinking that you are probably very accustomed to. In contrast, what we will be doing in this class is taking a sociological view of everyday life -- of the things we often take for granted. Because they are
things we take for granted, though, questioning them or being critical of them can be very difficult. Expect this!

* While these are my set office hours, any time that you find my office door open with me in it, you are welcome to come in.
Be forewarned, too, that sociology rarely provides easy, clear-cut answers to social problems or issues. Rather, what you should expect to get out of this course is a critical perspective on social life. (We'll be talking a lot in this course about what that means, so don't worry if it seems confusing at first!) You should be prepared to grapple with some issues you've never thought about before (or at least have never thought about sociologically before); be prepared to deal with value judgments, slippery concepts, and some ambiguity.

You should also be prepared to be uncomfortable sometimes! Because we will be delving into things that we all take for granted (including me, your professor -- and I've been doing this a long time), you may disagree strongly with or get angry at some of what you are reading or doing in this class. I personally think this is a good thing. It's better to be moved -- even to anger -- by a class than to be bored with it, wouldn't you say? So be warned!

A few words about my teaching style

Those of you who have had other large lecture courses -- or are taking others now -- will probably notice pretty quickly that my teaching style is not usually that of a "typical" lecturer. Rather, I much prefer to get you as actively involved in class as possible. What this means is that I will often ask you questions during lecture (sometimes rhetorical, sometimes things that I really want an answer to), will have you speak for a minute or two to your neighbors (about something class-related, of course!), will do an in-class exercise with you, will watch a video with you and then (with the GSIs) go around to small groups to discuss it for 5-10 minutes, or something similar. While we won't always have time to do things like this, I do hope -- and expect -- that much of the time, we will.

Because I teach this way, I have certain expectations regarding your behavior in class. First, sometimes I will ask questions of the class as a whole and expect you to answer as a class (i.e., all at once), while other times, I will want you to raise your hand and wait for me to call on you (class can get a bit chaotic if people just "yell out" their answers at me!). Second, and most importantly, I ask that you be actively engaged with the class and with the material we're covering while you're in this room. If you're not prepared to do this -- if you want to come to class and read a newspaper while I'm talking, or refuse to do the in-class exercises -- then there's not much point in your being in class.

Required texts

The required textbook is Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials, 2ND EDITION, by Diana Kendall. It's available at University Bookstore (in the Michigan Union), Ulrich's (549 East University at South University), and Michigan Book & Supply (317 S. State at North University). A large coursepack is also required; it is available at Accu-Copy, 518 E. William Street (near Cottage Inn), phone 769-8338.

The Kendall text has been placed on reserve at the Shapiro Undergraduate Library but since we will be using it so much, you are strongly urged to buy it. Due to the size of this class the coursepack will not be placed on reserve.

Course requirements and grades

This course will consist of two one-hour lecture periods and one two-hour discussion section most weeks. There will be three in-class exams, each covering about one-third of course material. In addition, two short papers are required.
Since this is a four-credit course, according to University guidelines you should expect to spend, on average, about 12 hours per week outside of class working on it. If you are a fast reader or have taken other social science courses (especially sociology courses), you may need to spend less time to do well. After the first week, the reading totals about 60-100 pages per week (many articles are very short, in the 5-10-page range); try not to get behind! You are expected to have read the assigned chapter/articles by the time your discussion section covers the material. Questions on all the coursepack readings are included in the coursepack itself; these questions are just to guide your reading, they are not homework! You will also find them useful in studying for the exams (hint, hint), so don't skip them.

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

- Attendance at and informed participation (both lecture and your discussion section) -- 20%
- Writing assignment (two short papers) -- 10% each, total 20%
- Exam #1, scheduled for Thursday, October 11 -- 20%
- Exam #2, scheduled for Tuesday, November 13 -- 20%
- Exam #3, scheduled for Tuesday, December 11 (the last day of class) -- 20%
- Extra credit (if applicable)

Attendance at and informed participation in your section (20%)

Attendance at lecture and especially at your discussion section will be very important in determining how well you do in this class! While attendance will not be taken in lecture due to the size of this class, you should try to attend as regularly as possible because approximately half the lecture material will not be from the textbook or readings. In addition, we will be seeing several short videos during lecture.

Sections will meet beginning next Tuesday, September 11, after the first substantive lecture. Attendance at your weekly discussion section is MANDATORY; this 20% of your final grade will be based on your attendance at and participation in section. The grade will be given by your GSI, who will base it on your overall engagement with and contribution to the course. An "A" participation grade will require excellent section attendance, excellent preparation (shown by your ability to use the readings to initiate and enrich discussion and debate), and a willingness to share your ideas and opinions with others. (Note that just "talking a lot" in section is not enough to earn a good participation grade!)

To do well in section, then, you should have read (not just skimmed) all the appropriate material beforehand and be prepared to discuss it. (Simply skimming before lecture is fine; some of the material may make more sense to you after lecture.) Don't be surprised if some of the readings seem hard; "thinking sociologically" is often harder for students than they would have anticipated. Come to section with questions, concerns, arguments, critical thinking. Be prepared to wrestle with some difficult issues!

Participation is emphasized in this course for two reasons. First, many of the most interesting and useful ideas you will hear in college will come not from instructors but from other students. Second, although the exchange of ideas in written form is usually emphasized in college, the ability to form, exchange, and critique ideas through focused discussion is not. These skills are equally difficult to master, and are just as important in most career fields.

One final note about section. For many of you, section will be THE easiest -- and most enjoyable -- way to improve your grade; it's THE easiest way to get an A+ -- a grade of 100 -- for 20% of your final grade. It's also the part of your grade over which you have the most control: all you have to do is attend regularly and participate, discussing the issues raised in this class.
Since most issues have relevance in your everyday life, this should actually be fun for you, at least some of the time!

**Writing assignment (2 short papers, 10% each, total 20%)**

You will write two short papers (3-4 pages each) over the course of the term that will be graded by your GSI. These papers are designed to help you better understand what a sociological perspective is by having you examine various aspects of the everyday world through a sociological lens. You will receive separate handouts that include the assignment choices, so only a few comments will be made here.

Sociology 100 is separated into three "units" of about 3-4 weeks each. Each unit ends with an in-class exam. You will complete one paper during each of the first two units of the course; **NOTE THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU MAY TURN IN TWO PAPERS AT THE END OF UNIT 2!** You may choose from among several options within each unit, each with its own due date. Note that since each unit ends with an exam, you may find that completing an earlier exercise is to your advantage.

The third paper -- based on material covered in Unit 3 -- is optional. If you are satisfied with your first two paper grades, you do not have to write a third paper. If you would like the opportunity to get a better grade than you did on the first two papers, you should write a third paper, and your top two grades will count 10% each. **Note that you MAY NOT skip writing a paper in Unit 1 or Unit 2 and write your second in Unit 3; the Unit 3 paper option is open ONLY to those students who already turned in a paper for each of the first two units.**

Be aware that written work in this course is held to high standards. We require both good sociological content (which itself requires an in-depth understanding of the readings, lectures, and/or videos on which the assignment is based) and good presentation of that content. In addition, "A" papers must contain original insight into course material. Simply repeating ideas and examples from lecture and section, even when you've used them appropriately, is not by itself "outstanding" work.

The writing assignment including Unit 1 options will be posted to our web site this weekend.

**Exams (three exams, 20% each, total 60%)**

Each of the three in-class exams marks the end of one course "unit." The exams will contain 20 multiple choice items, three short answer questions (which you will choose from six), and one essay (which you will choose from three). **All material from lectures, videos, the textbook, and the coursepack readings is "fair game" for exams!** Exams are cumulative only in the sense that some material "builds" on earlier material; for example, while for Exam #3 you won't be expected to remember picky details of some material we covered in Units 1 or 2, you should remember some major course themes, theoretical perspectives, and the like. For each exam you will get an explicit study guide that will give you practice questions, and I will hold a review session before each one, so don't worry too much at this point!

All students are expected to take the exams at the scheduled times, so please plan accordingly.

**Extra credit (can add a maximum of 3 points to your final grade)**
You may choose to do an extra credit assignment and get 1 to 3 points added to your final grade. The assignment, which will be posted to our class website this weekend, will ask you to apply sociological concepts to your everyday life.

Here's an example. Say that Joe ends up with an "uncurved" average of 86, which is a solid B. Because he has done progressively better on assignments and has done very well in section, he is bumped up to a B+. But because he also did the extra credit assignment and did it very well, he gets 3 points added, which gives him an A-. Overall, then, due to his "grade trend," work in section, and extra credit assignment, his grade has gone from a B to an A-!

A final thought

I got my Ph.D. here at the U-M (go blue!) in April 1999. I love sociology and love thinking about the issues raised by sociologists: issues about social class, and race, and gender, and sexual orientation, and all the other social identities that we often take for granted and don't think much about. I hope that over the course of this term, at least some of you will find my enthusiasm contagious! I will try to make class as interesting and even fun as I possibly can, but of course you have responsibilities here too. Come to class prepared by at least skimming the readings so you'll have some idea of what I'm talking about. Participate fully in the exercises we'll be doing in class; I guarantee that they will help you do better on the projects and exams. Watch the videos we'll see in class with a critical eye and jot down a few notes so you can discuss them with me, one of the GSIs, or your classmates immediately afterward. In short, just try to fully engage with the issues we'll be talking about in here.

I have very high hopes -- and equally high expectations -- for all the students in this class. I realize that in a class this size, I will probably not get to know all of you, but I do hope that you will stop by my office or email me about any questions or concerns you have about the class (or just to say hello!). I have taught at the U-M for several years now both as a GSI and as a lecturer and have found getting to know my students as individuals to be the most enjoyable part. So please do stop by!

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Schedule of Topics & Assignments

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT THE READINGS:
You should try to at least skim the reading assignments by the time lecture meets. (Some of the readings may make more sense to you after lecture, so skimming is fine.) Then READ the assignments by the time you're due to cover the material in your section.

All readings not listed as "textbook" are in your coursepack. I've taken articles from several different readers; for full citations of the readers, please see the last page of this syllabus. Please note that the coursepack also includes questions on each reading; you don't have to write out answers to the questions, but you should use them to guide your reading and to help you prepare for exams.

Thursday 9/6
TOPIC: administrative details, plus an introduction to the course & to "thinking sociologically"
ASSIGNMENT:
Please read carefully this syllabus and the lecture outline handout. Pay particular attention to the Doonesbury cartoon!
Then get started on next week's readings! (Yes, there are a lot, but most are very short.)

Unit 1. Society, Social Life, Social Groups, & Social Control

IMPORTANT NOTE: sections will begin meeting on Tuesday 9/11 after the first substantive class.

Tuesday 9/11 & Thursday 9/13
TOPICS: introduction to "thinking sociologically"; what sociologists do and how they do it
ASSIGNMENT:
(assignment for Tuesday 9/11 & Thursday 9/13 continued on next page)
On the "sociological perspective" and "thinking critically":


On applying the sociological perspective:

Donna Gaines, "Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead-End Kids," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 7-20

On sociological research:


**Tuesday 9/18 & Thursday 9/20**

**TOPIC:** culture

**ASSIGNMENT:**

Textbook, chapter 2, "Culture and Society," pp. 35-69
Michael Moffatt, "What College Is Really Like," in Newman reader, pp. 59-68
Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert A. Hummer, "Fraternities and Rape on Campus," in Charon reader, pp. 196-206

Horace Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema," in C&B reader, pp. 60-63

*to connect to sociological research:* Kenneth Good with David Chanoff, "The Conflict between Being a Researcher and a Human Being," in Tischler text, pp. 94-95

**Tuesday 9/25 & Thursday 9/27**

**TOPIC:** socialization

**ASSIGNMENT:**

Textbook, chapter 3, "Socialization," pp. 70-97
Dennis Overbye, "Born to Raise Hell?", in Landis text, pp. 67-69
Robert Granfield, "Making It By Faking It: Working-Class Students in an Elite Academic Environment," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 128-141
Brent Staples, "Just Walk On By," in Landis text, pp. 204-206
Sharlene Hesse-Biber, "Am I Thin Enough Yet?" in Rothenberg reader pp. 527-535
Michael Messner, "Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 113-128


**Tuesday 10/2 & Thursday 10/4**

**TOPIC:** social structure and social interaction

**ASSIGNMENT:**

Philip E. Zimbardo, "Pathology of Imprisonment," in Charon reader, pp. 86-88

David Rosenhan, "On Being Sane in Insane Places," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 209-219

Allen C. Smith III and Sherry! Kleinman, "Medical Students' Contacts with the Living and the Dead," in Newman reader, pp. 85-92; questions on pp. 102-103
Tuesday 10/9
   TOPIC: groups & organizations
   ASSIGNMENT:
   SKIM textbook, chapter 5, "Groups and Organizations," pp. 128-157
   Arlie Hochschild, "The Managed Heart," from M&B reader pp. 130-136

Wednesday 10/10, evening (exact time TBA), room TBA
   Review session for exam #1

Thursday 10/11
   EXAM #1 -- in-class, our regular time & room
   Discussion sections that meet between Thursday at 2 p.m. (the end of class today) and next
   Tuesday 10/16 at 1 p.m. (the beginning of our next class) DO NOT MEET THIS WEEK.

Unit 2. Social Inequality

Tuesday 10/16 & Thursday 10/18
   TOPIC: social inequality: focus on social class and stratification
   ASSIGNMENT:
   Textbook, chapter 7, "Class and Stratification in the United States," pp. 189-219
   Fischer et al., in M&B reader pp. 181-188
   R. Todd Erkel, "How Easy Is It to Change Social Class?", in Tischler text, pp. 242-243
   Christopher Jencks and Kathryn Edin, "Do Poor Women Have a Right to Bear Children?", in
   Ferguson family reader pp. 615-628

Tuesday 10/23 & Thursday 10/25
   TOPIC: social inequality, continued: focus on race & ethnicity
   ASSIGNMENT:
   Textbook, chapter 9, "Race and Ethnicity," pp. 248-278
   Robert Jensen, "White Privilege Shapes the U.S." and "More Thoughts on Why the System of
   White Privilege Is Wrong," in F&B reader, pp. 479-484
   Joan Moore and Raquel Pinderhughes, "In the Barrios: Latinos and the Underclass Debate," in
   C&B reader pp. 358-368
   Mary C. Waters, "Optional Ethnicity: For Whites Only?" in P&R reader pp. 444-454
Tuesday 10/30 & Thursday 11/1
TOPIC: social inequality, continued: focus on sex & gender
ASSIGNMENT:
Textbook, chapter 10, "Sex and Gender," pp. 279-307
Christine L. Williams, "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the 'Female' Professions," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 317-328
Cooper Thompson, "A New Vision of Masculinity," in Rothenberg reader pp. 630-636
Mindy Stombler, "'Buddies' or 'Slutties': The Collective Sexual Reputation of Fraternity Little Sisters," in K&S reader pp. 245-258

Tuesday 11/6
TOPIC: social inequality, continued: focus on sexual orientation
ASSIGNMENT:
Michael S. Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia," in Disch reader, pp. 132-139
Larry Gross, "Out of the Mainstream: Sexual Minorities and the Mass Media," in media reader, pp. 61-69
Barbara Smith, "Homophobia: Why Bring It Up?", in gay studies reader, pp. 99-102

Thursday 11/8
TOPIC: social inequality, continued: focus on age
ASSIGNMENT:
Robert N. Butler, "The Tragedy of Old Age in America," in M&B reader, pp. 245-250
Betty Friedan, "My Quest for the Fountain of Age," in M&B reader, pp. 251-257

Monday 11/12, evening (exact time TBA), room TBA
Review session for exam #2

Tuesday 11/13
EXAM #2 -- in-class, our regular time & room
Discussion sections that meet between Tuesday at 2 p.m. (the end of class today) and this Thursday 11/15 at 1 p.m. (the beginning of our next class) DO NOT MEET.

Unit 3. Social Institutions

Thursday 11/15
TOPIC: introduction to social institutions: education
VIDEO: "Sexuality 101," 60 Minutes, 3/22/98, or other
ASSIGNMENT:
Textbook, chapter 12, "Education and Religion," section on education ONLY, pp. 336-351
Jean M. Mizer, "Cipher in the Snow," in Landis text, pp. 65-67
Peter W. Cookson & Caroline Hodges Persell, "Preparing for Power: Cultural Capital and Curricula in America's Elite Boarding Schools," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 517-527
Jay MacLeod, "School and the Reproduction of Social Class," in Massey reader pp. 397-408
Tuesday 11/20
NO CLASS TODAY -- Professor Honeycutt is out of town.

Thursday 11/22
NO CLASS TODAY -- Thanksgiving break. Have fun, eat lots of turkey (or tofu, if you're vegetarian!).

Tuesday 11/27
TOPIC:  health & medicine as a social institution
ASSIGNMENT:
SKIM textbook, chapter 14, "Health and Medicine," sections on "Health in the United States" and "Health Care in the United States" ONLY, pp. 403-418 (will cover in lecture)
Robert Crawford, "Individual Responsibility and Health Politics," in Conrad reader 5/e, pp. 393-401

Thursday 11/29
TOPIC:  the economy & work as a social institution
ASSIGNMENT:
William Julius Wilson, "When Work Disappears," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 456-468
Robin Leidner, "Over the Counter: McDonald's," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 469-485
Elliot Liebow, "Men and Jobs," in Massey reader pp. 222-228

Tuesday 12/4
TOPIC:  the mass media as a social institution
ASSIGNMENT:
Ben H. Bagdikian, "Missing from the News," in S&C reader, pp. 50-56
Jean Kilbourne, "Beauty and the Beast of Advertising," in C&B reader, pp. 41-43

Thursday 12/6
TOPIC:  the family as a social institution; intimate relations
ASSIGNMENT:
SKIM textbook, chapter 11, "Families and Intimate Relationships," pp. 308-336 (will cover in lecture)
Pepper Schwartz, "Peer Marriage," in Ferguson family reader, pp. 212-222
Scott Coltrane, "Family Man: Fatherhood, Housework, and Gender Equity," in K&S reader pp. 229-245
Patricia Hill Collins, "The Meaning of Motherhood in Black Culture," in Ferguson reader 2/e, pp. 601-605
Monday 12/10, evening (exact time TBA), room TBA
Review session for exam #3

Tuesday 12/11
EXAM #3 -- our regular class time & room

FULL CITATIONS OF TEXTS & READERS USED:

Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (eds.), The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader (New York: Routledge, 1993) -- listed on syllabus as "gay studies reader"
Virginia Cyrus (ed.), Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993) -- listed on syllabus as "Cyrus reader"
Susan J. Ferguson (ed.), Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998) -- listed on syllabus as "Ferguson family reader"
Silvia Pedraza and Ruben G. Rumbaut (eds.), Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996) -- listed on syllabus as "P&R reader"
Henry L. Tischler, Introduction to Sociology, 6th edition (Fort Worth, Texas: The Harcourt Press, 1999) -- listed on syllabus as "Tischler text"