Sociology 211: The Sociological Enterprise

Fall 2013
Lecture section 001
Class Location: Sewell, room 6104
Class Time: Tues, Thurs: 1:00 – 2:15 pm

Instructor: Matt Hollander
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Office Hours: Tues, Thurs: 12:00-1, or by appt

Course Overview
This class provides an overview of sociology and will prepare you for further coursework in this field. Sociology majors must take either 210 (Comm-B) or 211 (not Comm-B), but non-majors are also welcome to take the class, space permitting.

In this course we will survey a wide variety of sociological topics. These include social stratification (e.g., by class, race/ethnicity, gender, and age), inequality and social justice, socialization and the life course, social interaction, social norms, religion, crime and deviance, health and medicine, and globalization. Believe it or not, sociologists researching these subjects are passionate about them and understand how they are exciting and important, not dry and boring. I see my challenge in the class as not only teaching you about these areas of sociology, but also conveying to you some of that fascination. These are matters that are vitally relevant for thinking persons in the 21st century who care about how our world is presently organized, the direction in which we are headed, and our place in it. During the semester, the challenge for you, in turn, will be not only to learn about these various kinds of sociology, but also to learn about yourself. What is it about Topic X that “hooks” you, rather than Topic Y? What is it about you that makes you so interested in that subject?

There is no way around it: the main task of this course is to read, understand, and form your own opinion about some very abstract ideas. Reading sociology can be quite pleasurable, rewarding, even life-changing, but can also be FRUSTRATING!—especially when reading a particular text for the first time. Readings for this class will take longer than, say, novels or newspapers. You will need to read a number of sentences and paragraphs at least twice to understand what the author is saying. So plan your reading time accordingly! You’re doing well if you can honestly tell yourself that you understood most of what you just read and could explain it to someone else.

Lectures are intended to (1) provide context and anticipate possible misunderstandings before you read, so your engagement with the texts is more rewarding and efficient, and (2) clarify and deepen your understanding after you read. Each lecture will therefore focus on the assigned readings for that day, and for the next class, while also leaving time for questions, discussion, and debate. Lectures are not intended to substitute for doing the reading yourself; the written assignments and exams are designed to make sure you do this, as well as attend class.

Reading Assignments
The required textbook is available at the University Bookstore (location is across Library Mall from Memorial Library: State St. and Lake). I’ve also placed it on reserve with UW Libraries.


The additional weekly readings will be downloadable from the class website on Learn@UW.

Evaluation: Final Grade Breakdown

5 SWA’s (short written assignments), 25% total (5% each)
Midterm exam, 25%
Final exam, 25%
Attendance, 20%
Participation, 5%
Total= 100%

Midterm (25%) and final (25%): The midterm exam will cover roughly the first half of the course. The final exam will not be cumulative, and will cover roughly the second half of the course. Both will take the form of take-home short essays (similar in format to the SWA’s).

5 Short written assignments (25% total, 5% each): You must turn in five (of a possible seven) short writing assignments (1 page of prose, minimum; single-spaced). If you turn in more than five, I will count only your top five scores. SWA’s will be posted to the course website one week before the due dates marked on the course schedule. On due dates, you must turn in a hard copy at the beginning of class. These are formal writing assignments, and should be written in clear and grammatical language. Their purpose is to develop your understanding of the readings through discussion, analysis, and comparison. SWA’s are a kind of practice for the midterm and final, which will use a similar format. The grading scale for these assignments is:

A (5/5 points) Excellent: Crystal-clear and well-expressed views based explicitly on the readings. Understanding of relevant course material is very strong. The assignment is organized well, using paragraphs each of which is devoted to advancing a particular dimension of the overall argument.
B (4/5) Good: A solid effort to express a view, but not totally clear. The displayed understanding of the relevant course material may be shaky.
C (3/5) Okay: Some sort of opinion is expressed, but may not be clearly grounded in the relevant course material.
D (2/5) Poor: Opinions are not at all clear, and are not based on the relevant course material.
F (0/5) No assignment turned in.

Attendance (20%): It’s not that I think my lectures are brilliant. But I’ve read this stuff before and I can help with the experience of wading through the texts. Excellent attendance of three or fewer absences over the whole semester gets an A (100). With your fourth absence, your attendance grade will be lowered a letter grade, and an additional letter grade for each further absence. 4 absences = B (85), 5 absences = C (75), 6 absences = D (60), 7 or more absences = F (0). If you have a good reason for being absent (serious illness or injury, family emergency, athletic competition, religious observance), you must let me know in order for it to be excused. If the absence is expectable (athletic, religious), you must give me two weeks’ notice. If the absence is unexpectable (illness, emergency), you must e-mail me or let me know why you were absent as soon as possible.

Participation (5%): As with the SWA’s, the purpose of the participation grade is to encourage you to develop your own opinions and (dis)agreements with the authors. I will assess your participation in class by the quantity, quality, and thoughtfulness of your questions, comments, remarks, criticisms, etc.

Final grade scale:
A 93.00-100%
AB 88.00-92.99%
B 83.00-87.99%
BC 78.00-82.99%
C 70.00-77.99%
D 60.00-69.99%
F is below 60%

Please note: I will not move you up to the next grade category if your final point total puts you on a grade borderline. E.g., an 87.91 final grade will be considered a B, not an AB.
**Special Accommodations**
If you need alternative arrangements for classes due to a disability or religious observance, please tell me as soon as possible. The McBurney Disability Resource Center determines what reasonable academic accommodations can be made.

**Academic Misconduct**
If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult [http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html). Lack of familiarity with these rules is not a valid excuse for misconduct. Cheating, plagiarism, or other misconduct will be dealt with strictly according to university policy, and severe penalties will be recommended to the Dean of Students.

*There are two ways to commit plagiarism: (1) Reproducing verbatim another author’s words without using quotation marks and/or without providing a citation; or (2) presenting as your own another author’s ideas without providing a citation. UW-Madison uses anti-plagiarism software. If you have any further questions, consult the handout “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Acknowledging Sources,” available at the UW Writing Center (6171 Helen C. White Hall) or speak with me.*

*******Course Schedule (any changes will be made via e-mail or class announcement)*******

**Week 1**

Sept.3: Introduction

Sept.5: What is Sociology?

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeQ7ig_SCB8&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeQ7ig_SCB8&feature=related)

- The French Revolution of 1789. Documentary on Youtube about what is probably the single most important socio-political event in modern world history. Please watch all 1.5 hours. Pay special attention when the following words are mentioned: democracy, equality, liberty/freedom, rights, republic, sovereignty of the people, freedom of the press/newspapers, power, authority, class, nationalism, revolutionaries/counter-revolutionaries, religion, universal suffrage, citizen.

**Week 2**

Sept.10: Classical Sociology


Sept.12: Sociological Research Methods

Week 3

Sept. 17: The Sociology of Culture I


Sept. 19: The Sociology of Culture I

No new reading. **DUE DATE: SWA 1**

Week 4

Sept. 24: The Sociology of Culture II


Sept. 26: Socialization and the Life Cycle


Week 5

Oct. 1: The Self and Social Interaction


Oct. 3: The Self and Social Interaction

No new reading. **DUE DATE: SWA 2**

Week 6

Oct. 8: Ethnomethodology and Social Norms


Oct. 10: Work and the Economy


Week 7

Oct. 15: Social Stratification

• Erik Wright and Joel Rogers. Contemporary American Society. Selections.
• Lane Kenworthy. “Is Equality Feasible?” Contexts.

Oct. 17: Gender I

• **DUE DATE: SWA 3**

   **Week 8**

Oct. 24: Gender II

• Arlie Hochschild. The Second Shift. Selections.

Oct. 22: Gender II

******Midterm Exam (25% of grade) due at beginning of class! Bring a hard copy to turn in.******

   **Week 9**

Oct. 29: Race and Ethnicity I


Oct. 31: Race and Ethnicity II

• **DUE DATE: SWA 4**

   **Week 10**

Nov. 5: Crime and Deviance I


Nov. 7: Crime and Deviance II


   **Week 11**

Nov. 12: Health and Medicine I


Nov. 14: Health and Medicine II

Week 12

Nov.19: Education I

• Alexander et al. A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology, pp. 421-446.
• DUE DATE: SWA 5

Nov.21: Happy Thanksgiving! No Class

Week 13

Nov.26: Education II


Nov.28: Politics, Publics, and the State

• DUE DATE: SWA 6

Week 14

Dec.3: Social Movements

• Alexander et al. A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology, pp. 583-610.

Dec.5: Religion

• DUE DATE: SWA 7

Week 15

Dec.10: Globalization

• Benjamin Barber. Jihad Versus McWorld. Selections.

Dec.12: Review

No new readings.

******FINAL EXAM (25% of grade). Due on Monday, December 16, at 12:00 noon. Bring a hard copy to my office, Sewell 2475.