

Sociology 211: The Sociological Enterprise

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Spring 2012

Lectures: Tuesday & Thursday, 1pm - 2:15pm

Classroom: 6104 Social Sciences Building

Instructor: Matt Nichter

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Introduction

Sociology 211 is a survey course intended to give students a sense of what sociologists study and how they study it. The class is designed to serve as a springboard for further coursework in the discipline.

The main prerequisite for this course is intellectual bravery: you must be willing to question your preconceived notions about how society works. For as Karl Marx observed, “All science would be superfluous if the appearance and the essence of things coincided.”

Assignments and Workload

There is a lot of reading for this course. On average, you will be assigned around 125 pages of reading per week – and significantly more on some weeks. I have designed a grading scheme that rewards consistency and effort:

11 quizzes	x	10 points each	=	110 possible points
3 short papers	x	30 points each	=	90 possible points

Beginning on February 2nd, I will administer a quiz every Thursday at the beginning of class. Quizzes will typically cover the readings assigned for that week, in addition to lecture material from Tuesday. They will consist of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. We will go over the answers to each quiz immediately after it is administered. I will not hand back graded quizzes, so please keep track of your scores. If you miss a quiz without prior permission from me, you may not make it up unless you can provide a doctor’s note. I will drop your three lowest quiz grades.

You must submit three (3) short papers. There will be four (4) paper assignment options to choose from during the semester. Detailed instructions for each paper assignment will be posted on the course website. Papers should be roughly three pages long, typed and double-spaced. I will collect them in lecture.

There is no midterm or final exam.

Class Participation, Office Hours, Email

Though our class is large and there are no separate discussion sections, I encourage you to ask (and answer) questions during lecture. You are also more than welcome to come to my office hours or email me with questions and concerns. I want you to succeed in this course!

Given the number of students enrolled, please allow 48-72 hours for replies to your emails. If you email me about an assignment close to the deadline, you run the risk of not receiving a reply in time.

A Word on Cheating

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you cheat on a quiz or plagiarize material for a paper, I will fail you, report you to a dean, and recommend your expulsion. So don't do it.

Be aware that there are two ways to commit plagiarism:

- by reproducing verbatim (or almost verbatim) another author's words, without using quotation marks and/or without providing a citation; or
- by using another author's ideas (even if you don't use their precise words) without providing a citation.

Required Textbooks

The following books can be purchased from A Room of One's Own bookstore, located at 307 West Johnson Street (Tel. 257-7888).

1. Marx, K. & Engels, F. *The Communist Manifesto: A Road Map to History's Most Important Political Document*. P. Gasper, ed. (Haymarket, 2005)
2. MacLeod, J. *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood* (Westview, 2008)
3. Piven, F. & Cloward, R. *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed and How They Fail* (Vintage, 1978)
4. Alexander, M. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New Press, 2009)
5. Chang, J. *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (Picador, 2005)
6. Schlosser, E. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Harper Perennial, 2005)

The total retail price of the required books is approximately \$120. The bookstore has ordered both new and used copies of each book. If you prefer to purchase them on the internet, please be cognizant of the following issues. Though item 1 on the list above is available in many editions, the one I have ordered includes supplementary materials that are part of the assigned reading. Item 2 is available in three editions; feel free to purchase the third (2008) edition or the second (1995 or 2004) edition, but do not buy the first (1987) edition, which is missing some assigned material. All of the various editions of items 3, 5, and 6 are identical, so feel free to purchase any of them.

For those who find the cost of books prohibitive, I have placed several copies of each on reserve at the College Library. Please notify me if you encounter any difficulties with the reserve system.

Calendar of Topics and Readings

Readings marked [O] will be made available online through e-reserves at: **my.wisc.edu**

I highly recommend that you download all of the online readings at the beginning of the semester and burn them onto a CD or DVD, to avoid difficulties when university servers malfunction.

All readings should be completed in time for lecture on the date listed.

Underlined dates denote substantially higher-than-average reading load for that week; plan ahead accordingly.

Why Study Sociology?

Tues. 1/24 C. Wright Mills, "The Sociological Imagination," in J. Charon (ed.), *The Meaning of Sociology: A Reader* (Prentice-Hall, 2002) [O]
J. Charon, "Sociology and Democracy," in Charon. [O]

The Distinctiveness of Modernity: Or, Life Before Capitalism

Thurs. 1/26 R. Leakey, *The Making of Mankind* (Abacus, 1981), p. 97-109 [O]
R. Heilbroner, *The Making of Economic Society* (Prentice-Hall, 1962),
p. 18-41 [O]

Coming to Grips with Capitalism: Classical Sociological Theory

Tues. 1/31 K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 14-20, 24-5; 37-72, 87-89;
156-7; 160-3 [Text]

- Thurs. 2/2 Y. Bradshaw, et al., *Sociology for a New Century* (Pine Forge, 2001), p. 51-5 [O]
 E. Durkheim, "The Division of Labor in Society," in C. Calhoun et al. (eds.),
Classical Sociological Theory (Blackwell, 2002) [O]
 A. Giddens and M. Duneier, *Introduction to Sociology* (Norton, 2000), p. 13 [O]
 M. Weber, "The Protestant Ethic & the Spirit of Capitalism," in Calhoun et al. [O]
 M. Weber, "Bureaucracy," in Calhoun et al. [O]

Income and Wealth Inequality

- Tues. 2/7 C. Collins and F. Yeskel, *Economic Apartheid in America* (New Press, 2005),
 Ch. 2 [O]
 K. Bradbury and J. Katz, "Are Lifetime Incomes Growing More Unequal?
 Looking at New Evidence on Family Income Mobility," *Boston Federal
 Reserve Bank Regional Review* (2002) [O]
 G. Wm. Domhoff, "The Bohemian Grove," in D. Newman, *Sociology Readings*
 (Pine Forge, 2000) [O]
 L. Kenworthy, "Is Equality Feasible?" *Contexts* 6(3)(2007) [O - optional]

Poverty

- Thurs. 2/9 B. Ehrenreich, "Nickel and Dimed," in G. Massey (ed.), *Readings for Sociology*
 (Norton, 2003) [O]
 K. Edin and L. Lein, "Making Ends Meet," in Newman [O]
 E. O. Wright, "The Class Analysis of Poverty," in *Interrogating Inequality*
 (Verso, 1994) [O – optional]

Education

- Tues. 2/14 J. Kozol, *Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in
 America* (Three Rivers, 2005), p. 39-62, 175-181 [O]
 S. Bowles and H. Gintis, "Education and Inequality," in J. Macionis and
 N. Benokraitis (eds.), *Seeing Ourselves* (Prentice Hall, 2001) [O]
 S. J. Gould, "Curveball," *The New Yorker*, 11/28/94 [O – optional]

- Thurs. 2/16 J. MacLeod, *Ain't No Makin' It*, Chs. 1, 3-7, 9-10; and p. 259-268 [Text]

Short paper option #1 due. Topic: *Ain't No Makin' It*

Work

Tues. 2/21 J. Schor, *The Overworked American* (BasicBooks, 1992), p. 1-38, 49-53, 72-82 [O]

Organizations and Power: Corporations and Labor Unions

Thurs. 2/23 G. Wm. Domhoff, *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, & Social Change* (McGraw Hill, 2006) p. 21-31, 39-43 [O]
T. Nace, *Gangs of America: The Rise of Corporate Power and the Disabling of Democracy* (Berrett-Koehler, 2005), Introduction & Chs. 2-6 [Link to free download of book; click 'Download the book in Acrobat format']:
<http://www.gangsofamerica.com/read.html>
AFL-CIO, "The Silent War: The Assault on Workers' Freedom to Join a Union and Bargain Collectively in the United States" (AFL-CIO, 2005), first read p. 13-20, then read p. 2-12 [O]

Wealth and Democracy

Tues. 2/28 M. Parenti, *Democracy for the Few* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002), p. 203-5, 218-30, 197-203 [O]
T. Nace, *Gangs of America*, Ch. 12 [Link to free download of book; click 'Download the book in Acrobat format']:
<http://www.gangsofamerica.com/read.html>
C. Lindblom, "The Market as Prison," in T. Ferguson and J. Rogers (eds.), *The Political Economy: Readings in the Politics and Economics of American Public Policy* (M. E. Sharpe, 1984) [O]
Thurs. 3/1 E. Herman & N. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon, 2002), first read Ch. 1, then read Introduction [O]

The Social Construction of Race

Tues. 3/6 M. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, p. 20-35 [Text]
J. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New Press, 2008), Ch. 4 (optional but recommended) & Ch. 5 (required) [O]
D. Roediger, "Gook: The Short History of an Americanism," in *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working-Class History* (Verso, 1994), p. 117-20 [O]

Residential Segregation

- Thurs. 3/8 J. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New Press, 2005), p. 3-12, 55-57, 90-115, 140-7 [O]
N. Denton & D. Massey, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Harvard, 1998), Chs. 2, 4, and p. 160-165 [O]

Racial Inequality and Discrimination

- Tues. 3/13 A. Krueger, "What's in a Name? Evidently Plenty If You Are Looking For a Job," *New York Times*, 12/12/02 [O]
D. Zirin, *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the U.S.* (Haymarket, 2005), Ch. 7 [O]
N. Thrupkaew, "The Myth of the Model Minority," *The American Prospect*, 4/8/02 [O]

Crime and Incarceration

- Thurs. 3/15 V. Kappeler & G. Potter, *The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice* (Waveland, 2005), Ch. 7 [O]
M. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, p. 1-15, 40-57, 58-104, 120-125, 130-133, 137-208 [Text]

Short paper option #2 due. Topic: *The New Jim Crow*

Social Movements

- Tues. 3/20 F. Piven & R. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, p. 97-126 [Text]
Thurs. 3/22 F. Piven & R. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, p. 126-155 [Text]
K. Voss and R. Fantasia, "The Future of American Labor: Reinventing Unions," *Contexts* 3(2)(Spring 2004) [O – optional]
Tues. 3/27 F. Piven & R. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, p. 181-211 [Text]
Thurs. 3/29 F. Piven & R. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*, p. 211-258 [Text]

Short paper option #3 due. Topic: *Poor People's Movements*, Ch. 4

SPRING BREAK

Gender and Socialization

- Tues. 4/10 E. Leacock, "Montagnais Women & the Jesuit Program for Colonization," *Myths of Male Dominance* (Monthly Review, 1981) [O]

Gender Inequality and Discrimination

- Thurs. 4/12 A. Levy, *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture* (Free Press, 2006), p. 1-5, 7-33, 82-88, 139-165, 197-200 [O]
D. Zirin, *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the U.S.*, Ch. 8 [O]
P. Martin & R. Hummer, "Fraternities & Rape on Campus," in Charon [O]

Demography and Family Change

- Tues. 4/17 S. Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* (Viking, 2005), Chs. 1-3
J. Stacey, *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Values in the Postmodern Age* (Beacon, 1997), p. 38-50 [O]

Globalization and Immigration

- Thurs. 4/19 E. Bonacich and R. Appelbaum, *Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry* (Univ. of California, 2000), p. 1-25 [O]
G. Seidman, "Activists Crusade Against Sweatshops," in Bradshaw, et al. [O]
G. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (Norton, 2003), Chs. 1-2 [O]
S. Lerner, "Global Corporations, Global Unions," *Contexts* 6(3) (2007), p. 16-22 [O - optional]
- Tues. 4/24 J. Akers Chacón and M. Davis, *No One is Illegal* (Haymarket, 2006), Chs. 18, 19, 12, 14 [O]

Culture and Conformity

- Thurs. 4/26 T. Delaney, *Seinology: The Sociology of Seinfeld* (Prometheus, 2006), p. 29-45, 131-138 [O]
P. Meyer, "If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You Do It? Probably," in Charon [O]
N. Klein, "Alt.everything: The Youth Market and the Marketing of Cool," in *No Logo* (Picador, 1999) [O - optional]

Sociology of Religion

- Tues. 5/1 E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Free Press, 1995), p. 44, 208-14, 429 [O]
K. Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in *Marx and Engels on Religion* (Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 38-9 [O]
M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Scribner, 1958), p. 180-2 [O]
M. Weber, *Economy and Society* (Univ. of California, 1978), p. 485-6 [O]

Technology, Power, and Popular Culture

- Thurs. 5/3 J. Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, p. 10-18, 28-30, 72-82 (skim), 90-107 (skim), 109-125, 127-136, 145-152, 170-179 (skim), 191-194 [Text]
- Tues. 5/8 J. Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, p. 203-211, 220-229, 232-236, 236-248 (skim), 248-253, 253-261 (skim), 299-329, 337-353 (skim), 368-399, 417-421, 439-448 [Text]
- Thurs. 5/10 E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*, Chs. 2-3, 5-10 [Text]

Short paper option #4 due. Topic: *Fast Food Nation*