

**Course Syllabus**  
SOC 2000: Understanding Human Society (Section 006)  
T/Th 1:25 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.  
Wayne State University  
Department of Sociology  
Winter 2015

**Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Christian Genesky

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and by appointment

**Phone:** (313) 577-2390 (Department number; not a direct line to me)

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**Office:** 2264 Faculty Administration Building

**Textbook Information**

Conley, Dalton. 2013. *You May Ask Yourself*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Norton. ISBN: 9780393912999

Familiarity with the text is key to success in this course, and the textbook is available for purchase or for rent at the campus bookstore and online, but is also on reserve at Wayne's Undergraduate Library, where it can be checked out for two hours at a time.

*Important Note:* Some of my colleagues are using a different version of this same textbook. It has a similar title and looks similar. Ours has a neon yellow cover. **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU DO NOT CONFUSE OUR TEXT WITH THE OTHER.** The other version is a "core edition" that has different page numbers and content. By using the wrong book you will not have access to all of the content that we will cover in this class. When in doubt, check the ISBN number near the barcode on the back of the book—this is a unique identifier for this specific version of the text.

**Course Description**

**Learning Objective:** The discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to her/his own life.

Specifically, in this course you will have the opportunity to:

- 1) Develop an understanding of and apply the sociological perspective towards understanding the world in which you live.
- 2) Develop an understanding of the basic elements of the scientific process.
- 3) Develop a "theoretical tool bag" that you can draw from to further understand the observations that you make in the social world.
- 4) Learn about yourself by applying course content to your everyday experiences in the social world.
- 5) Cultivate abstract and critical thinking skills.
- 6) Engage in intellectual discussions with your classmates.
- 7) Work on your reading, writing, and verbal skills.

## Communication

Some things to keep in mind about course communication:

- 1) **The absolute best way to get in touch with me is via email.** Notice that the above-listed phone number is departmental, not direct. We do not have phones in each of our offices, and, while you can leave a message for me at our front desk, I am much more likely to respond quickly to an email.
- 2) **Please allow me 24-48 hours to respond.** While my response time will typically be much quicker than this (especially for emails), I sometimes get caught up with other responsibilities, or receive a number of messages all at once. I will reply to everything as effectively as I can. If you have not heard from me in 48 hours, I encourage you to contact me again.
- 3) **Include the course name (SOC 2000) in the subject line of your email, and sign it with your name.** I understand and respect that some individuals prefer to use an email address other than that given by WSU, and I will not ignore your email if it's from a personal address, but there is no way for me to know who an email is from or what it's regarding. Regardless of your email address, you must indicate that you are emailing about our course in the subject, or else you run the risk of your email being deleted and ignored. If you email me through the Blackboard client, this is done automatically. Otherwise, please take care to do so.
- 4) **Keep in mind that etiquette matters** and that the way that you communicate with me (and others) is a reflection of yourself and your perception of our relationship. The inevitable result of this is that sending me an email resembling a text message with poor spelling and grammar (or one that is unprofessional or from an unprofessional email address) influences my perception of you. I cannot tell you how to write an email, but I promise you: college is a good time to start the habit of engaging in professional behavior.
- 5) **Matters of substance will not be discussed via email or phone.** Grades or course issues, in particular, will not be discussed in these formats to avoid the risk of misinterpreting tone or message. I will be happy to talk about those matters in person, either at my office hours or at any other time that we can schedule to meet. Many questions are best handled in person anyway, and I am always thrilled to meet with students.
- 6) **Learn how to use Blackboard,** since it will be a primary source of communication throughout the semester. All course information is managed through Blackboard, including course announcements and other postings. Assignments and the course syllabus are also posted on Blackboard. Not checking Blackboard or not getting your email is no excuse for missing assignments or other information relevant to this course. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to inquire about announcements made in class as well as the subject material. See: <http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard/>.

## Course Policies

### **Attendance, Preparation and Participation**

In addition to a mastery of course content, a large portion of your final grade will be determined by your preparation for, attendance at, and participation in course meetings. It is these factors that tell me that you are able to properly put knowledge about the concepts that we are studying to use. Although it is important, I also know that sometimes “life happens”, and exceptions have been built in to my grading system to account for this. As such, attendance and participation will be evaluated in two ways: **reading quizzes** and a **participation score**. Each of these are discussed in detail in the “grades and assignments” section below.

### **Class Conduct**

Please treat myself and your fellow students with respect at all times. Due to the nature of the topic of this course, some points discussed in class may be controversial, uncomfortable or may lead to heated debates.

Learning something new isn't always comfortable and often our personal judgments cloud our ability to learn to the fullest. Please try to keep those judgments outside of the classroom and focus on gaining new knowledge while in class or reading the assigned texts. If you have strong feelings about anything brought up in class, please feel free to make an appointment with me. I am more than willing to listen to your concerns.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

You are required to adhere to university codes of conduct and guidelines throughout this course. In particular, you must be aware of what constitutes plagiarism and cheating. For more details on university guidelines and policies, please check the Student Code of Conduct posted on Blackboard: <http://dosowayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf>.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

Wayne State University is working to build a community that is inclusive and welcoming to all people, including those with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 5155 Gullen Mall in the Undergraduate Library. SDS telephone number is [313-577-1851](tel:313-577-1851). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you during my office hours to discuss your needs. Please do not request accommodations directly from me without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services; <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

### **Religious Observances**

Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations of the University student body and staff, the Academic Calendar makes no provisions for religious holidays. However, it is University policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students with classes or examinations that conflict with their religious observances are expected to notify the instructor well in advance so that mutually agreeable alternatives may be worked out.

### **Use of Electronics**

*Laptops/Tables:* Although electronic forms of note-taking have been proven to be less effective than handwritten notes I will allow them for this purpose. However, if it comes to my attention that your electronic device is being used for *any purpose* other than to take notes for our class—social media, email, internet browsing, etc.—I will ask you to leave the class meeting and discontinue your use of electronics for the rest of the semester, since these activities can be wholly distracting to yourself and other students.

*Voice Recorders:* No voice recording devices will be permitted in class meetings without the prior consent of both myself and your class mates. Much of the material discussed in this and other sociology classes is sensitive, and we all have the right to speak in class without the fear that we are being unknowingly recorded.

*Cell Phones:* The use of cell phones will not be permitted. Cell phones may stay turned on for the purposes of child or elder care, but they may not be used for any other reason and may not be disruptive. Keep your phone on a setting that will not distract others (some vibrates are VERY loud), and if you get a call that you must take, simply step out of the classroom to answer it. Using a phone to text, to browse, or anything else will most likely result in me staring at you until we're both uncomfortable. If it is a continuous problem, you will be asked to leave.

*Outside of Class:* Technology (particularly computer and internet access) will be required for the completion of some assignments in this class. I will not accept limited access (either in the form of "I didn't have..." or "I don't know how...") as an excuse for late or missing work. Wayne State University has countless resources for making sure that you complete online assignments. If you think that access to technology will be a problem please contact me as soon as possible.

## **Drops/Withdraws**

If you wish to drop this class, you must do so by March 29<sup>th</sup>. After this point, you will be issued a withdrawal grade (WP, WF, or WN). If you fail to withdraw by March 29th, and stop attending class, you will receive an “F”.

## **Makeup Exams**

I understand that we are all human and unexpected events often occur in our lives. However, I strongly discourage missing on days of scheduled exams. If a problem does arise and it is not possible to take the exam on the scheduled date, contact me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements. Students who miss the scheduled date of an exam are expected to arrange to take a makeup exam within a one-week period. If arrangements are not made in this time a makeup exam may not be permitted.

## **Grades and Assignments**

- 1) **Three Exams (100 points each; 300 points total).** An exam will be administered at the end of each unit, in week 4, week 9, and week 17 (final exam period). Each exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions, and will be designed to assess your mastery of content covered in course lectures, discussions, readings, and videos.
- 2) **Reading Quizzes (10 points each; 100 points total)** will be administered 13 times throughout the semester. These quizzes will be brief in nature (2-3 questions) and will be designed to tell me whether you have read for class and are prepared to contribute to class discussions. These quizzes cannot be retaken or made up at a later date. If you are not present in class when a quiz is administered, you will receive a zero. Of the 13 quizzes that are administered, your top 10 scores will be counted towards your final quiz score.
- 3) **Participation (50 points)** will be assessed based on your regular attendance in class and constructive contributions to class discussions, as well as your active participation in any group activities. Whereas exams test your knowledge of course concepts, a demonstrated ability to think and speak critically about those concepts is also an important aspect of your final grade.
- 4) **Blog Posts (75 points each; 150 points total).** In this course we will use a WordPress blog as a collaborative platform for online discussions. This blog will resemble a series of 500 word editorials written by all of you—the contributors. Each of you will write two 500 word posts for our blog, comparable to what you might find in the newspaper opinion section or digital columns on popular news/political websites. In each post, you will be required to think critically about what you read that week and combine the reading with your own thoughts and experiences to take a position about some aspect of the chapter. **This blog takes the place of writing and homework assignments in our class, and should be taken seriously.** Although the blog posts will not be quite as formal as an essay assignment, I do expect you to employ proper spelling and grammar to present a coherent argument, and to correctly cite any sources you use.
- 5) **Blog Responses (25 points each; 100 points total).** In addition to writing blog posts, you will be required to respond to your classmates on the blog 4 times throughout the semester. These responses can be to a classmate’s initial blog post or to another responder’s comment (or to a response to a response, or to a response to a response to a response, etc.). Responses must be 250 words in length and elaborate, expand, critique, or defend some aspect of the content to which you are responding.

## Grading Scale

93-100% A	87-89.9% B+	77-79.9% C+	67-69.9% D+
90-92.9% A-	83-86.9% B	73-76.9% C	63-66.9% D
	80-82.9% B-	70-72.9% C-	60-62.9% D-
			Below 60% F

GRADING RUBRIC: Your grade is based on a total of **700** points.

If you wish to challenge your final grade, you must do so through the proper university channels; <http://www.cfpc.wayne.edu/files/FinalGradeAppeal.pdf>

### Tentative Semester Schedule

*This schedule is tentative, and is subject to change. I will keep you all promptly updated about any changes that I feel it necessary to make.*

*Also keep in mind that the readings listed are **the baseline** –the chapter that is associated with the given topic. It is possible that the chapter readings will be supplemented with journal articles, online resources, videos, or other readings, depending on the week. Any additional materials (or links to such) will be uploaded to blackboard and mentioned in class and via email. I will never assign anything that I am not confident you have access to.*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Notes/Chapter associated with topic</i>
1	<i>January 13th</i>	<i>Intro/Syllabus</i>	
	<i>January 15th</i>	<i>What is Sociology?</i>	<i>Syllabus AND Chapter 1</i>
2	<i>January 20th</i>	<i>Socialization</i>	<i>Chapter 4</i>
	<i>January 22nd</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Chapter 3</i>
3	<i>January 27th</i>	<i>Social Groups</i>	<i>Chapter 5</i>
	<i>January 29th</i>		
4	<i>February 3rd</i>	<i>Deviance and Control</i>	<i>Chapter 6</i>
	<i>February 5th</i>	<i>Exam I</i>	<i>Exam I in class</i>
5	<i>February 10th</i>	<i>Stratification</i>	<i>Chapter 7</i>
	<i>February 12th</i>		
6	<i>February 17th</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Chapter 8</i>
	<i>February 19th</i>		
7	<i>February 24th</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Chapter 9</i>

	<i>February 26th</i>		
8	<i>March 3rd</i>	<i>Poverty</i>	<i>Chapter 10</i>
	<i>March 5th</i>		
9	<i>March 10th</i>	<i>Health and Society</i>	<i>Chapter 11</i>
	<i>March 12th</i>	<i>Exam II</i>	<i>Exam II in class</i>
10	<i>March 17th</i>		<i>Spring Break (No Classes)</i>
	<i>March 19th</i>		<i>Spring Break (No Classes)</i>
11	<i>March 24th</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Chapter 12</i>
	<i>March 26th</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Chapter 16</i>
12	<i>March 31st</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Chapter 13</i>
	<i>April 2nd</i>		
13	<i>April 7th</i>	<i>Capitalism and the Economy</i>	<i>Chapter 14</i>
	<i>April 9th</i>		
14	<i>April 14th</i>	<i>Authority and the State</i>	<i>Chapter 15</i>
	<i>April 16th</i>		
15	<i>April 21st</i>	<i>Collective Action, Social Movements, and Social Change</i>	
	<i>April 23rd</i>		<i>Final Class Meeting</i>
16	<i>April 28th</i>		<i>Study Day (No Class)</i>
	<i>April 30th</i>	<i>Exam III</i>	<b><i>FINAL EXAM @ 1:20 PM-3:50 PM</i></b>