

**Understanding Human Society (SOC 2000:007)**  
Winter 2015

**Instructor:** Dr. Michelle Jacobs  
**Office:** 2263 Faculty / Administration Building (FAB)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, or by appointment  
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<i>Course</i>	<i>CRN</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
2000	20227	[007]	M W	03:00 pm - 04:25 pm	0334 STATE

*\*\*You are responsible for the information in this syllabus. Read it carefully & ask questions if necessary.*

**Course Description & Learning Outcomes**

**Welcome!**

*This course is designed to introduce you to the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality. As an academic discipline, sociology is unique because it focuses on people in their social environments. The primary goal of this introductory course is to help you develop what is called a “sociological imagination,” or the ability to see how social forces impact individual lives. You will also have the opportunity to cultivate abstract and critical thinking skills, engage in intellectual discussions with your classmates, and work on your reading, writing, and verbal skills. Course content areas include sociological theory and research methods, culture, socialization, social control, and social inequalities.*

At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to:

- (1) Describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these differences.*
- (2) Describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social reality.*
- (3) Apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to your own life.*

**Required Course Materials**

Textbook: *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking like a Sociologist (core third edition)*, by Dalton Conley. ISBN 978-0-393-91945-5.

\*Additional readings and assignments will be posted on *Blackboard*. You are expected to log in to Blackboard regularly to access course materials (e.g., readings and homework assignments), check email, and review announcements.

## Course Requirements & Expectations

ASSIGNMENT	%
Attendance, Preparation, & Participation (APP)	15
Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▫ Chapter Quizzes (8)</li><li>▫ Exploring Census &amp; Community Survey Data (4)</li></ul>	25
Exam I	20
Exam II	20
Exam III	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Attendance, Preparation, & Participation (APP): 15%**

High APP scores will be earned by students who 1) correctly and completely compile and submit *APP materials*, 2) attend class regularly, and 3) participate respectfully and knowledgeably.

1) The largest portion of your APP grade will be based on your *APP materials*:

You are responsible for keeping & assembling artifacts from in-class discussions and activities. Such “artifacts” will include notes and written responses to questions posed in class (among other things). APP assignments will not be announced in advance and they cannot be made up, so class attendance is crucial to receiving a high APP score. I will collect APP materials twice during the semester – around the middle of the term and before the final exam. *I will not accept APP materials that are submitted in a folder or binder.* Simply staple the components together in the order they were assigned and make sure your name is visible on the first page.

2) *Attend class regularly*: Information that is critical to your understanding of course materials will be provided during class time, so it is necessary that you attend. If you miss class for any reason, *you are responsible* for the following: submitting homework assignments on time; obtaining class notes from a

classmate; continuing with the reading; and scheduling a meeting with me if you have specific questions about the materials you missed. In addition, chronically arriving late for class and/or leaving class early is disrespectful and disruptive and will have a negative impact on your APP grade. Please note that I do not expect to be informed of singular absences and I do not make arbitrary judgments regarding “excused” or “unexcused” absences. In the case of an emergency that will result in excessive absences, please contact me immediately.

3) *Participate respectfully and knowledgeably*: You are expected to treat all members of the class and the broader community with *respect*. This means *listening attentively* when others are speaking and using *inclusive language* when it is your turn to speak. We will discuss sensitive topics in this course. Everyone is encouraged to participate in these discussions, but personal opinions should be presented in a way that does not marginalize any person or group. *Respectful participation* also means refraining from participating in private conversations (in person or on the phone) during class time.

- Cell phone use is not permitted when class is in session (barring extraordinary circumstances, of which I must be informed before class begins). I will reduce your course grade by 2% for each unauthorized use of your cell phone. The same rule applies to tablets.
- You may *NOT* use a laptop computer in class unless you can articulate a specific need and you have received my express permission to do so. For students granted permission: If I discover that you are not using your computer for class purposes, I will reduce your course grade by 2% and revoke your computer use privileges.

In addition, you are expected to complete all assigned work prior to class so you are able to contribute *knowledgeably* to class discussions. This includes asking thoughtful questions and responding thoughtfully to verbal and written questions, as well as participating actively in group work. Your opinion is valuable, but you must be able to critically assess the readings and relate them to your personal experiences and broader social phenomena to demonstrate that you understand and can apply the sociological perspective. The more actively you engage in class, the more everyone will gain from this experience.

### **Homework | Quizzes and Data Exercises: 25%**

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Chapter Quizzes (8) and Census and Community Survey Data Exercises (4) must be completed on Blackboard. These assignments are *open book* and *open notes*. The quizzes are designed to familiarize you with course materials before we discuss the materials in class. You must complete each Chapter Quiz by 2 pm on the day it is due (typically Mondays). The Data Exercises are designed to assist you with the development of analytical skills. They are also due at 2 pm (typically on Wednesdays). Due dates are noted on the course schedule\*. *No late assignments will be accepted*, and in fact, the assignments will not be available online after the 2 pm deadline. I will drop your lowest score before calculating final grades.

\* *Due dates may change if the course schedule is adjusted.*

### **Exams: 60%**

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Three exams – each worth 20% of your final grade – will be given in this course. Exam questions will focus on the specific areas covered leading up to each exam, but Exams II and III are cumulative in the sense that previously learned knowledge (e.g., the sociological theories and methods discussed prior to Exam I) serves as the foundation for knowledge and skills developed later in the course. Exams are

mostly objective (multiple-choice, true & false, completion), but they may have subjective components (short answer essay) as well.

*Make-up exam policy:*

If you know in advance that you must miss an exam due to extenuating circumstances, you can schedule a make-up exam *prior to* the exam date. Make-up exams taken after the regularly scheduled exam date will be comprised of ESSAYS. If you miss an exam without contacting me in advance, you will be permitted to take the make-up exam as long as you schedule to do so *within one week* of the regularly scheduled exam. In addition, missing an exam without prior permission will result in an automatic grade deduction of 20%.

*Class cancellation policy:*

If classes are cancelled on exam day, the exam will be given during the next scheduled class. If classes are cancelled the class prior to exam day, we will review for the exam when classes reconvene and the exam will be given during the next scheduled class.

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*Please note:* Clear and concise writing is an essential aspect of college-level work. All written work should be properly punctuated, grammatically correct, and clearly written. Handwritten APP materials must be *legible*. If you need writing assistance, please contact the WSU Writing Center (2310 Undergraduate Library, 313-577-2544). For more information about the Writing Center, visit <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing>.  
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**Grades**

You will be graded according to the following scale:

Grade	Percentage
A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D+	67 – 69
D	60 – 66
F	59 and below

**Final grades are FINAL!** Opportunities for “extra credit” will *not* be made available. No points will be added to any student’s grade at the end of the semester. Do not ask me to make an exception on your behalf.

## Additional Student & Instructor Responsibilities

### Student responsibilities:

- I (the instructor) reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus. As such, you (the student) are responsible for keeping up with any changes that are announced in class, on Blackboard, or in email communications. Not attending class, not checking Blackboard, and/or not checking your WSU email account are not legitimate excuses for missing assignments and other information relevant to this course.
- You are *strongly encouraged* to communicate with me (the instructor) through email and/or in person if you have any comments, questions, or concerns. I cannot assist you if you do not let me know that you need assistance. *Please schedule an appointment to meet with me*, whether you would like to meet during office hours or at another designated time.
- *Emails* must have a clear and informative subject line that includes your full name, the course name, and the *SECTION* in which you are enrolled. Emails without this information in the subject line will be promptly returned to sender. I also ask that you send emails that are appropriate for the university setting, meaning that they should have a salutation and should be written in complete sentences with real words – i.e., “you” instead of “u.”
- *Religious holidays*: “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 their instructors well in advance so that mutually agreeable alternatives may be worked out.”
- *Accommodative services*: "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 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.” *Please refer to the SDS website for further information: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>*
- *Academic dishonesty*, which includes cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of unethical academic behavior, *will not be tolerated*. Cheating and plagiarism are forms of academic theft that destroy the integrity of academic communities. It is expected that all students enrolled in this class support the letter and the spirit of the Student Code of Conduct. It is your responsibility to review the Code of Conduct, which is available for download at the Dean of Students Office website: <http://www.doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html>. Ignorance is not a viable defense against allegations of student conduct violations.

***My policy on academic dishonesty:*** Suspected academic dishonesty will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Students suspected of academic dishonesty may receive a score of 0 on the assignment or a score of 0 in the course, depending on the magnitude of the offense. Moreover, *I am obligated to report all instances of suspected academic dishonesty to university administrators.*

### **Instructor responsibilities:**

- I will provide you with the necessary tools for learning and doing sociology.
- I will come to class prepared to discuss the materials and to facilitate the educational process.
- I will be available to answer questions you have about course materials during class times, office hours, independently scheduled meetings, or by email. I will do my best to answer emails received Monday through Thursday within 48 hours. I will also make every effort to respond to emails received Friday through Sunday by the following Monday. If you do not receive a response from me within these time frames, you should assume that I did not receive your email and resend it.
- I will explain class assignments and outline my expectations for graded work.
- I will grade your work as consistently and fairly as possible.
- I will grade and return your written assignments and exams in a timely fashion.
- I will treat all students with respect.
- I will acknowledge and correct my mistakes.

### **Important Dates**

Mon, January 12: Classes begin

Mon, January 19: *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day* (university closed, no class)

Mon, January 26: Last day to add a course or drop a course with full tuition reimbursement

Sun, February 8: Last day to drop a course with no grade reported (no tuition reimbursement)

Fri, February 13: Degree applications due

Mon, March 2: Early assessment period ends

Mon, March 16 through Sat, March 21: Spring break

Wed, March 25: *No class*

Sun, March 29: Last day to withdraw from a class *with instructor permission*

Mon, April 27: Classes end

Tues, April 28: Study day

Wed, April 29 through Tues, May 5: Final Exams

## Course Schedule

The course schedule is *tentative* and inevitably will be adjusted throughout the semester.

*Assigned coursework should be completed on the day noted. Reading materials available on Blackboard are denoted with an asterisk (\*).*

**IMPORTANT:** Additional short readings & web links will be posted to Blackboard throughout the semester. You are expected to read all of the materials available to you under each topical heading.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Course topic</i>	<i>Assigned materials</i>
01/12	Welcome! Introductions & Syllabus	
01/14	The Sociological Imagination: An Introduction	Ch 1, pp. 3-15 <i>and</i> 33-39 (Conley) *Should We Generalize about People?
01/19	<i>MLK, Jr. Day (university closed, no classes)</i>	
01/21	Sociological Theory	Ch 1, pp. 15-33 (Conley); <b>Ch 1 QUIZ</b> *Three Sociological Perspectives
01/26	Research Methods	Ch 2, pp. 43-71 (Conley); <b>Ch 2 QUIZ</b>
01/28	Research Methods	*Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment
02/02	Culture & Media	Ch 3, pp. 75-113 (Conley); <b>Ch 3 QUIZ</b>
02/04	Culture & Media	*Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism & the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture; <b>Ch 3 DATA EXERCISE</b>
02/09	wiggle room   Exam I Review	
02/11	<b>Exam I</b>	
02/16	Socialization & the Construction of Reality	Ch 4, pp. 117-149 (Conley); <b>Ch 4 QUIZ</b>
02/18	Socialization & the Construction of Reality	*The Egg and the Sperm <b>Ch 4 DATA EXERCISE</b>

02/23	Social Control & Deviance	Ch 6, pp. 187-233 (Conley); <b>Ch 6 QUIZ</b>
02/25	Social Control & Deviance	*The New Jim Crow *The Mark of a Criminal Record <b>Ch 6 DATA EXERCISE</b>
03/02	Stratification	Ch 7, pp. 237-273 (Conley); <b>Ch 7 QUIZ</b>
03/04	Stratification	*Families Facing Untenable Choices *Savage Inequalities <b>Ch 7 DATA EXERCISE</b>
03/09	wiggle room   Exam II Review	
03/11	<b>Exam II</b>	

03/16 & 03/18	!!!~~~~!!!~~~~ <i>Spring break (no classes)</i> ~~~~~!!!~~~~!!!
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03/23	Sex, Gender, & Sexuality	Ch 8, pp. 277-319 (Conley); <b>Ch 8 QUIZ</b>
03/25	<i>No class</i>	
03/30	Sex, Gender, & Sexuality	*R. Kelly's Transchild; * How Boys Teach Each Other to Be Boys; *The Case for Raising Feminist Boys
04/01	Sex, Gender, & Sexuality	
04/06	Race & Ethnicity	Ch 9, pp. 323-369 (Conley); <b>Ch 9 QUIZ</b>
04/08	Race & Ethnicity	*Defining Racism: Can We Talk?
04/13	Social Change   Resisting Oppression	*Visions of a Better Future: Creating a More Just World; *Action Continuum
04/15	Social Change   Resisting Oppression	<i>American Experience: Freedom Riders (movie)</i>
04/20	Social Change   Resisting Oppression	<i>American Experience: Freedom Riders (movie continued)</i>
04/22	wiggle room   Exam III Review	
04/27	<b>Exam III</b>	



## Engaged Reading\*

Reading provides opportunities to create new knowledge. An author writes to communicate ideas or share experiences, but cannot possibly say all there is to say about any given topic. Readers must bridge the gaps of meaning; as they do, they contribute their own assumptions, experiences, and ways of perceiving “reality.” In this way, every act of engaged reading is a process of meaning creation.

Engaged reading is *active* reading. You should take notes as you read and reread an author’s work, paying careful attention to the author’s arguments. Doing so will help you judge the strength of the author’s claims.

Think about the following questions as you read:

- What is the author’s primary focus &/or primary research question?
- What key terms contribute to your understanding of this work? How are these terms defined by the author?
- What are the author’s key claims &/or findings?
- What evidence is used to support the author’s claims/findings?
  - Which theory/theories does the author use?
  - Are data used to support the author’s claims?
  - If so, what are the data and how are they analyzed?
- Does the author acknowledge arguments that contradict her claims? What are they?
- What are the strengths of this piece?
- What are the weaknesses of this piece?
- What is the most interesting part of the author’s work?
- What assumptions / life experiences do you bring to this process that lead to your unique interpretations?

Tips for highlighting and annotating during the active reading process:

- A pencil works as well as a pen or marker; try both and see which you like best.
- Underline each claim an author makes.
- Circle or box definitions or essential terms.
- Use arrows or lines to show connections.
- Use vertical lines in the margins to mark entire passages.
- Star the most important items.
- Use question marks for confusing places.
- Use the margins to:
  - Summarize key terms, sections, or ideas in your own words.
  - Articulate disagreements with the author’s arguments.

\* Material adapted from:  
<http://www.slideshare.net/UCEW/engaged-reading-and-writing>