**Understanding Human Society**

**Soc 2000-004**

**Thursdays 11:30-2pm**

**Room: Main 121**

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**Welcome**

In this class we will analyze how society is constructed and the ways individuals are affected. We will talk briefly about sociological theory, while mainly concentrating on how race, class and gender affect individuals on a daily basis. You will be asked to think critically about sociological concepts and your place in this world.

**Course Topics**

1. Basic sociological concepts that provide the foundation of sociology, more specifically, sociological imagination, sociological research methods, and major social theories.
2. The intersectionality of race, class, and gender inequalities and how these contribute to oppression.
3. The social construction of deviance and how social control is used to re-enforce social norms.

**Course Objectives**

1. Understand how sociologists define and study social problems, as well as how they use the scientific method.
2. Be familiar with the prevalence of race, class, and gender inequalities, but also understand how these three identities overlap and create intersectionality.
3. Understand the consequences and proposed solutions of social problems.
4. Critically think about your community and the direct and indirect consequences of your actions within that community.
5. Identify potential solutions that can contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and contemplate changes that could work towards improving communities.

**Required Readings**

The required book can be downloaded for free from blackboard. The link is currently available on blackboard. The book is titled, “Introduction to Sociology 2e.”

Additional readings will be posted on blackboard early in the semester. You are required to read all of the articles before the class date that they are assigned so that you are able participate fully in discussion. I highly suggest downloading all of the articles as soon as possible to avoid last minute complications. If you have any issues downloading the readings, contact me as soon as possible.

**Classroom Format**

Our classes will consist of group discussion, lectures, and interactive exercises. Since the course is dedicated to understanding human society, I ask that each of you come to class with an open mind, respect others opinions and participate in a cooperative manner. If you choose to be disrespectful you will be asked to leave and lose any participation points you earned that class period.

*Laptops and cell phones are not allowed.* Since most of our class is discussion-based, a laptop is unnecessary and distracting. Please turn off your cell phone before class and keep it in your backpack or bag. If caught texting or using a phone, students will be marked absent for that day. If there is some sort of emergency and you have to check your phone or you have to leave class early, please let me know ahead of time.

If I need to inform you about any additional information pertaining to the class, I will do so via email or blackboard. Please check both of these regularly to make sure that you are well informed. This syllabus should be used as a guide, but I may make changes during the semester.

**Grade Details**

Exams 45 points

Paper 1 15 points

Paper 2 15 points

Presentation 15 points

In-Class Participation 10 points

**Total 100 points**

**Grade Details**

**Exams**

You will take three exams that are worth 15% each. The exams will take place in class using scantrons to answer multiple choice questions. Please inform me ahead of time if you are unable to make it that day or have any further questions. If you are unable to access the exam, you must let me know as soon as possible. Failure to communicate an absence in a timely fashion will result in zero points for that exam.

**“Personal Choice” Paper**

For this assignment, you are going to choose an everyday activity or social occurrence that the majority of people believe to be acceptable, but that is actually harmful. The goal of this paper is to describe what an individual might see as a “personal choice” and analyze how it may negatively or positively affect other people. This paper will be 3-5 pages and contribute 15% to your overall final grade. **DUE DATE: March 8th**

**Current Event Paper**

For this paper you will find and sociologically analyze a current news article or news topic pertaining to sociological concepts. The article can be about any social problem from any country that you are interested in. You are allowed use an article from any reputable source: newspaper, online news source, or magazine. You must give a brief summary of the article and then discuss the problem using terms and concepts we have discussed in class. This paper must be at least 3-5 pages in length and will make up 15% of your final grade. **DUE DATE: April 12th.**

**Presentation**

You are required to do a presentation about your current event paper. The information you will be sharing can be presented in whatever way you see fit; powerpoint, speech, etc. The presentation will be informal, lasting between 7-10 minutes. This will make up 15% of your final grade.

**In-Class Participation**

Throughout the semester there will be 10 in-class participation activities or assignments. You cannot make up the participation points from that day if you are absent without a legitimate excuse. If you give me an acceptable excuse, I will allow you to make up points. This will be worth 10% of your overall grade.

**Academic Dishonesty – Plagiarism and Cheating**

Academic misbehavior means any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the education process. All forms of academic misbehavior are prohibited at Wayne State University, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Students who commit or assist in committing dishonest acts are subject to downgrading (to a failing grade for the test, paper, or other course related activity in question, or for the entire course) and/or additional sanctions as described in the Student Code of Conduct. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment. If it happens again, student will fail course. Students caught cheating will automatically fail the exam. If it happens again, student will fail the course. University policy surrounding plagiarism, fabrication and cheating: Dean of Student’s Office website at (<http://doso.wayne.edu/academic-integrity.html>).

* Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use, or intentionally providing or attempting to provide, unauthorized materials, information or assistance in any academic exercise. Examples include: (a) copying from another student’s test paper; (b) allowing another student to copy from a test paper; (c) using unauthorized material such as a "cheat sheet" during an exam.
* Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification of any information or citation. Examples include: (a) citation of information not taken from the source indicated; (b) listing sources in a bibliography not used in a research paper.
* Plagiarism: To take and use another’s words or ideas as one’s own. Examples include: (a) failure to use appropriate referencing when using the words or ideas of other persons; (b) altering the language, paraphrasing, omitting, rearranging, or forming new combinations of words in an attempt to make the thoughts of another appear as your own.
* Unauthorized reuse of work product: submission for academic credit, without the prior permission of the instructor, of substantial work previously submitted for credit in another course. Example: submitting a paper in a current course that was written for, and submitted in, a previous course.
* Other forms of academic misbehavior include, but are not limited to: (a) unauthorized use of resources, or any attempt to limit another student’s access to educational resources, or any attempt to alter equipment so as to lead to an incorrect answer for subsequent users; (b) enlisting the assistance of a substitute in the taking of examinations; (c) violating course rules as defined in the course syllabus or other written information provided to the student; (d) selling, buying or stealing all or part of an un-administered test or answers to the test; (e) changing or altering a grade on a test or other academic grade records.

**Student Disabilities Services**

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The SDS office is located in the Adamany Undergraduate Library. The SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TTD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours or at another agreed upon time to discuss your needs.

**Student Services**

The Academic Success Center (Undergraduate Library) assists students with content in select courses and in strengthening study skills. Visit www.success.wayne.edu for schedules and information on study skills workshops, tutoring, and supplemental instruction (primarily in 1000 and 2000 level courses). The Writing Center is located on the 2nd floor of the Undergraduate Library and provides individual tutoring consultations free of charge. Visit clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/writing to obtain information on tutors, appointments, and the type of help they can provide. Library research assistance: Working on a research assignment, paper,

or project? Trying to figure out how to collect, organize, and cite your sources? Wayne State librarians provide on-campus or online personalized help. Contact them at http:library.wayne.edu/consult

**Class recordings**

Students need prior written permission from the instructor before recording any portion of this class. If permission is granted, the audio and/or video recording is to be used only for the student’s personal instructional use. Such recordings are not intended for a wider public audience, such as postings to the internet or sharing with others. Students registered with Student Disabilities Services (SDS) who wish to record class materials must present their specific accommodation to the instructor, who will subsequently comply with the request unless there is some specific reason why s/he cannot, such as discussion of confidential or protected information.

**Class Schedule**

**What is Sociology?**

Jan 11: Introduction to the Course

Jan 18: Sociological Imagination

Blackboard: C. Wright Mills, “The Sociological Imagination”

 Michael Schwalbe Chapters 1-2

 **\*First paper assigned today**

**Class Inequality**

Jan 25: Social Class and Stratification

 Chapter 9: Social Stratification in the United States

 Blackboard: “Nickel and Dimed”

Feb 1: Wealth and Inheritance

Blackboard: “Common Wealth and the Self-Made Myth”

 Blackboard: “Of the 1%, For the 1%, by the 1%”

Feb 8: Economic Inequality

Blackboard: “McDonalds Budget Plan Leaves out a Critical Line: Corporate Welfare”

**\*First Exam**

**Race Inequality**

Feb 15: Race and Ethnicity

 Chapter 11: Race and Ethnicity

Feb 22: Whiteness

 Blackboard: “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

March 1: Resisting Racism

Blackboard: “How White People Can Serve as Allies to People of Color in the Struggle to End Racism”

 Blackboard: “Breaking the Silence”

**\*Please bring the rough draft of your personal choice paper. We will be editing them in class today. Your peer edits will count towards your participation grade.**

**Sex and Gender Inequality**

March 8: Intro to Sex and Gender

 Chapter 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Blackboard: Abra Fortune Chernik “The Body Politic”

**\*Paper one due, Second paper assigned today!**

March 15: NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

March 22: Gender and the Patriarchy

 Blackboard: “Oppression”

 Blackboard: “Patriarchy”

 Blackboard: Sexual Assault on College Campus

March 29: Masculinities

Blackboard: “Masculinity as Homophobia”

 Blackboard: “Dude You’re a Fag”

**Second Exam**

April 5: Healthcare Inequality

 Chapter 19: Health and Society

 Blackboard: “Millions for Viagra, pennies for Disease of the Poor”

 **\*Bring a copy of your paper today.**

**Deviance and Social Control**

April 12: Introduction to Deviance

 Chapter 7: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

 **\*Second Paper Due!**

April 19: Prison Industrial Complex

 Blackboard: “Cruel and Unusual: The True Cost of Our Prison System”

 Blackboard: “The Prison Industrial Complex”

April 26: Presentations

May 3: Presentations

May 10: **Third Exam**