

Course: Sociology 2000; section 003 and 501 (Understanding Human Society)

Classes meet: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:40am – 11:55am in Science Hall 2025

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Office Hours: Tuesday: 9:00-10:00am and 12:30 – 2:30pm

Thursday: 9:00 – 10:00am

M/W/F: by appointment (not available Monday/Thursday 12:00 – 3:00pm)

Required Text: Schaefer, Richard T. 2014. *Sociology Matters*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

*Additional readings are required and made available on Blackboard.

Course Objective:

This course is intended to introduce you to the field of sociology. In this class, you will be exposed to the general ideas, concepts, theoretical perspectives, and research methods within the field of sociology. The underlying objective of this course is to help you develop a sociological imagination that will foster an enhanced awareness concerning the effects that social forces have on your lives and the lives of your fellow human beings. Areas of inquiry include social organization and institutional life, processes of socialization, culture, conflict, and social change—just to name a few. This course will stress abstract and critical thinking and to foster such thinking skills the sharing of personal perspectives is encouraged. More 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.
- (8) Contribute to your community via your participation in the CommunityEngagement@Wayne initiative.

Expectations

Students taking this course will be tested over material derived from the text, articles, film/videos, lectures, and class discussions—in short, everything is fair game for the exams. A good portion of the material that you will be tested over will not be found in the readings. For this reason, it is imperative that students attend class. However, attending class alone will not ensure course success. In addition to class attendance, you will need to study each assigned reading carefully. I strongly recommend that you complete the assigned readings prior to class and take summary notes that capture the readings main ideas. Class lectures and discussions will incorporate material from the readings but I will not devote an exorbitant amount of class time to “teaching” the specifics of each reading. In fact, I will not discuss some of the material derived from the readings at all. In other words, I am working under the assumption that everybody can read and comprehend basic ideas and issues derived from the readings and I will thus spend the limited class time focusing on issues that are more complicated and connecting the readings to broader issues/ideas/concepts. With that said, I am not discouraging you from asking questions about things that remain unclear after you complete the readings. Some of the readings are difficult and to foster learning we, as a class, will need to discuss them in detail. Also, remember that if you do not understand something it is inevitable that others do not understand it as well so please ask questions, ask questions, and ask more questions. In short, careful preparation of the reading assignments is a crucial area in which you will need to exercise self-discipline (reading before the class that the assigned reading(s) will be discussed), independence (trying to understand the author's argument on your own), and initiative (asking questions about anything that remains unclear to you).

As part of Wayne State's community engagement initiative (see www.communityengagement.wayne.edu), this course will also require you to complete 10 hours of service-learning in a community agency that deals in some way with social inequality. This course requirement will thus add to the time commitment that you must make if you are to have a successful experience in this course. I understand that you all have other obligations that you must fulfill, including, but not limited to, those associated with your other classes, children, and job. As such, you will have some flexibility as to when you complete your service-learning hours but ultimately this course requirement will necessitate that you do some advance planning. If you do so, completing the required 10 hours of service learning should not be an issue. However, if you fail to plan and wait until the last minute to complete your hours there is an increased likelihood that you will have a difficult time juggling all of your commitments and thereby not do as well in this class as you otherwise could have done with a little planning.

Blackboard

Blackboard is an instrumental part of this course and as such, you are expected to login to Blackboard on a regular basis to access course materials (e.g., readings, study guides, lectures, etc.), check email, and review announcements. If you do not login to Blackboard on a regular basis you will not know what is going on in the course and your chances for success will thus be diminished greatly!

Student Conduct

This is a college course; therefore, I expect that you are all adults and will act accordingly. The success of this class depends largely on the students, making class participation imperative. All expressions of ideas are welcome assuming that these expressions are not uncivil to your classmates. Harassment of any nature will not be tolerated. Students are also expected to maintain academic integrity and therefore, cheating of any sort may result in failure of this course. For additional information on academic integrity and related issues refer to the Student Conduct Services homepage (<http://www.doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct/index.html>). The student code of conduct is also available on BlackBoard for you to review. Remember, ignorance is not a viable defense against allegations of student conduct violations.

Late Assignments

I expect you to submit your service learning project (e.g., time log and journal entries) in class on December 2nd. However, in the event that you are unable to attend class on this day, you can email it to me but must do so before class begins and at your own risk. In other words, I am not responsible for "lost emails." To minimize "risks" associated with submitting your service learning project electronically, I suggest that you utilize your WSU email account. If you do email me your service learning project you should subsequently check your email for a confirmation message indicating that I received it. Turning in your service learning project late will result in a 5-point deduction per day and this includes weekends. I consider an assignment late at the beginning of class on the day that the assignment is to be submitted.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is expected. While there will be no formal attendance policy in this class excessive absences will inevitably be reflected in your final course grade. Excessive tardiness and leaving class early will be regarded as disrespectful. If there is a problem with getting to class on time or having to leave early, please see me as soon as possible. You are all adults and are capable of making the decision to attend class. In cases in which you are unable to attend class you are responsible for obtaining missed information from a classmate (if you are sick, stay home and get better but **I do not need to see doctors' notes** if this is the case). I will not provide students with my lecture notes nor will I reiterate lectures for individual students. In the case of an emergency, where excessive absences result, please contact me as soon as possible so that I can work with you.

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. Makeup exams will be disproportionately essay format.

Class Cancellations

In the event that classes are cancelled for any reason on the scheduled day of the exam, the exam will be given the next scheduled class meeting. If classes are cancelled the class prior to the day of a scheduled exam, the exam will be given as scheduled. If this is the case, you will not have an opportunity to ask questions in the class prior to taking the exam so I would encourage you to contact me via telephone or email with questions.

Students with 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 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is [313-577-1851](tel:313-577-1851) or [313-577-3365](tel: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. Please **DO NOT** request accommodations directly from me without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services. 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 about students with disabilities and the services we provide for faculty and students: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Extra Credit

I do not give extra credit. Focus your time and energy on the learning opportunities that I have provided you with, instead of hoping to do additional work toward the end of the course. If you follow the course plan, you will not need extra credit opportunities! This course is intentionally designed with several different types of assignments to give you multiple and varied chances to succeed. However, it is imperative that you keep-up with the readings and projects to avoid falling behind. If you run into any difficulties, please see me immediately so that we can develop a plan for you to meet your goals.

Components of Final Grade (Note: Students are required to keep backup copies of all their work and check Blackboard regularly to ensure that their grades are accurately posted.)

Exams

Three exams consisting of objective (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, etc.) items will be given in this course. The first exam is worth a maximum of 100 points. The second exam will be worth a maximum of 110 points. The final exam will be worth a maximum of 120 points. The final exam will be comprehensive and must be taken at the scheduled exam date. (Maximum total exam points = 330).

In-class quizzes

There will be six announced quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will test reading comprehension and the application of course material. Each quiz will be worth a maximum of 25 points. Students can use **their own** written notes for all of these exams. Therefore, students should complete all reading before class and take well-organized notes on each reading. Students **will not be permitted to take these quizzes in the event of absences (excused or otherwise)**. However, to be fair, I will drop the lowest score at the end of the semester. Thus, six quizzes will be given and the highest five scores will be considered in determination of this component of your final grade. If a student does not perform well on these quizzes, it is in most cases a reflection of class absences, lack of class preparation, and/or lack of attentiveness while attending class. In short, students who **regularly** prepare for class, attend class, and maintain attentiveness while in class have the best chances for success on these quizzes (and all assignments for that matter!). (Maximum points for quizzes = 125)

Service Learning hours (25 points)

In this course, you are required to complete 10 hours (2.5 points per/hr.) of service learning in a community site that provides a service to the public. Service learning has been described in many different ways but Janet Eyler and Dwight Files offer one rather comprehensive description of this form of learning (1990):

Service-learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experiences as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves (p. 3).

In other words, service learning will provide you with two primary opportunities (and a host of potential latent opportunities, such as network expansion). First, you will have an opportunity to move beyond the acquisition of knowledge via books by experientially learning about social forces (a much deeper or higher-order level of learning) as they are manifested in the everyday lives of others in your community. Second, you will have the opportunity to apply the sociological perspective by actively participating in efforts to ameliorate or otherwise cope with social problems in your community. <http://www.communityengagement.wayne.edu/volunteering.php>

I strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last minute to complete your service learning hours. If you do so, you will not get full credit for the service-learning journal assignment (see description of this assignment below) and will likely have a difficult time juggling all of our other commitments. You must complete your service learning hours in no more than two-hour increments. That is, you cannot wait until the last minute and visit your service learning site for 10 hours in one day. Regardless of how you choose to schedule your service learning hours, you should strive to complete all of your hours by November 20th. Note that you must have documentation of the hours you spent at your service-learning site, which has been signed by a site supervisor. The Time Log is available on blackboard.

Note: You should have solidified the details surrounding your service-learning no later than September 18th. By this date, you should know where you are going to do your service-learning hours and you should have arranged your first visit with the site supervisor. To begin the process of coordinating your service-learning hours you should visit CommunityEngagement@Wayne and click on the volunteer opportunities link. In the event that you have an organization in mind where you would like to do your service learning and which is not on this list you are welcome to do so.

Service Learning Journal (50 points)

You are required to keep a journal documenting and reflecting on your service learning experiences and observations. For each hour of service learning you are required to submit a 1 page (1 page is the minimum and it should be typed, double spaced, 12pt font, 1-inch margins on all sides) journal entry wherein you reflect on your experiences/observations **and** integrate those experiences/observations with the academic materials that we have read and/or discussed in class. Good journal entries should thus accomplish three goals. First, you should document significant events and interactions that you observe or take part in while engaging in your service-learning project. Second, you should reflect on your experiences and observations. Reflecting on your experiences and observations is your opportunity to offer personal insights into how you felt or what you thought about your experiences/observations. For instance, if you talk with a man about the antecedents of his homelessness, you might reflect on how this personal anecdote substantiated or contradicted your existing beliefs about homelessness. You may also pose questions in your reflections about your experiences/observations (I wonder why so many veterans are homeless? Perhaps one reason why veterans are more likely to be homeless is...?). Finally, in your journal entries you should integrate your experiences and observations with the materials we discuss in class. How do the reading materials and class discussions relate to your service-learning experiences and observations? You should draw from the academic literature we read and discuss in class to cultivate a higher level of understanding into your experiences and observations. How do your experiences and observations reflect notions of privilege, power, and difference? How do your experiences and observations reflect larger processes that produce and reproduce inequality? How are micro, macro, historical, and contemporary processes that sustain political, economic, and social inequalities manifested in the daily experiences of those who seek services from your service-learning site? In short, providing a simple summation of the events that transpired while you were at your service-learning site is inadequate. You must also reflect and integrate!

In sum, shortly after each visit to your site, take some time to describe, reflect, and integrate your experiences/observations. **Do not** complete this portion of your service learning project after you have completed all of your hours. If you do so it will certainly be reflected in your grade. At the top of each journal entry, you should clearly indicate the date and times that you are journaling about. Your journal entries will be graded on content (do you describe, reflect, and integrate your service-learning experiences/observations), structure (are your journal entries organized in a logical fashion, do your entries flow and make sense, etc.), and grammar/syntax (are there typos, do your sentences make sense, etc.). You will submit your journal entries along with your time log on December 2nd. Each journal entry will be worth a maximum of 5 points.

Note for Honors Students:

If you are taking this course for honors credit you must complete 15 additional hours of service learning for a total of 25. Each hour of service learning will be worth 2 points (50 total points). You are, however, only required to complete a journal entry for 15 (75 points) of these service learning hours. Thus, you should be prepared to submit around 15 pages of journal entries (Total points = 125).

Grading Scale

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 97-100% A+ | 87-89% B+ | 77-79% C+ | 67-69% D+ |
| 93-96% A | 83-86% B | 73-76% C | 63-66% D |
| 90-92% A- | 80-82% B- | 70-72% C- | 60-62% D- |
| | | | Below 60% F |

GRADING RUBRIC: Your grade is based on a total of **530** points. (580 points for honors students)

Tentative Schedule (Tentative meaning that this is not sketched in stone and almost certainly will be altered according to class interest, time constraints, and other unforeseen events. As such, it is **your responsibility** to check Blackboard **regularly** to verify what you need to do in order to be prepared for each class session. If you do not do so you will not do as well in this class as you otherwise could have done.)

| <u>Topic or Activity</u> | <u>Readings</u> | <u>Reading #</u> |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| The Sociological Imagination | Chapter 1, pp. 1-14 (Schaefer) | 1 |
| | The Promise (online) | 2 |
| | Teenage Wasteland (online) | 3 |
| Social Theory | Chapter 1, pp. 15-21 (Schaefer) | 4 |
| Research Methods | Chapter 1, pp. 21-36 (Schaefer) | 5 |
| | Situationist Perspective on Evil (online) | 6 |
| Culture | Chapter 2, pp. 37-54 (Schaefer) | 7 |
| | Culture of Fear (online) | 8 |
| | Code of the Streets (online) | 9 |
| Interaction, Structure, and Socialization | Chapter 2, pp. 54-73 (Schaefer) | 10 |
| | Extreme Isolation (online) | 11 |
| | Chapter 3, pp. 74-99 (Schaefer) | 12 |
| | Night to His Day (online) | 13 |
| | Sex Stereotypes and the Media (online) | 14 |
| | Learning to Strip (online) | 15 |
| | Anybody's Son Will Do (online) | 16 |
| | Becoming a Marijuana User (online) | 17 |
| | Stratification and Social Class | Chapter 5, pp. 128-163 (Schaefer) |
| Chapter 9, pp. 246-252 (Schaefer) | | 19 |
| The Power Elite (online) | | 20 |
| Preparing for Power (online) | | 21 |
| Droves of Unqualified Kids (online) | | 22 |
| As American as Apple Pie (online) | | 23 |
| Media Magic (online) | | 24 |
| Race and Ethnicity | | Chapter 6, pp. 164-187 (Schaefer) |
| | Race at Work (online) | 26 |
| | Getting a job, Not Getting a Job (online) | 27 |
| | Affirmative Action and Minority Applicants (online) | 28 |
| | Forty Acres and a Mule (online) | 29 |
| | Chapter 9, pp. 235-245 (Schaefer) | 30 |
| | Savage Inequalities (online) | 31 |
| | Savage Inequalities Revisited (online) | 32 |
| | Sex and Gender | Chapter 7, pp. 188-207 (Schaefer) |
| Detours on the Road to Equality | | 34 |
| Women and Weight | | 35 |
| The Glass Escalator (online) | | 36 |
| The Mommy Tax (online) | | 37 |

