

"Whatever sociology may be, it is the result of constantly asking the question, what is the meaning of this?"
C. Wright Mills

Understanding Human Society

SOC 2000

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI

Spring 2015

3 Credit Hours

Tuesday / Thursday 2:15pm – 4:05pm

State Hall, Room 0035

Instructor: Michael Sabbagh

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Campus Office Hours:

Tuesday: 12:00 pm – 2:00 PM & by appointment

Office Location: 2264 Faculty Administration Building

Office Phone: 313-577-2930

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist / Full*
3rd Edition by Dalton Conley ISBN: 978-0-393-91945-5

Additional readings to be passed out in class or available on Blackboard.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Introduction to Sociology! Whether you are a student passionate about sociology or one of the many who take their first sociology course with little idea of what it is, I hope that you will find the following 15 weeks to be engaging, exciting, informative and fun. I look forward to working with each one of you and sharing my love of the discipline. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to enhance your learning experiences in this course.

GOALS

Students who successfully complete this course will develop a rich understanding of the basics of sociology. This course is not focused on purely “factual” learning, or learning facts for the sake of facts. Rather, the focus will be on “conceptual” learning. It is more important to me that you walk away from this class understanding the complex relation of concepts in sociology than being able to recite the facts.

The goals for this course reflect the American Sociological Association's learning objectives for an introductory course to sociology: "[Introduction to] 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."

There are many times that we will problematize the definitions that we are learning, and understand the concepts for their strengths and some of their weaknesses. How do these concepts change meaning in time or space? With that being said, the main goal of this class is to learn concepts in sociology through a lens of critical thought, with a special eye towards issues of social justice.

Learning outcomes for this course

1. State and illustrate how the sociological imagination can assist in explaining your life.
2. Articulate the usefulness of sociological theory and research in your everyday experience.
3. Analyze how social structure operates and impacts our lives.
4. Understand the history and development of sociology as a field, how it fits within and relates to the other social sciences and other forms of scientific inquiry.
5. Recognize and demonstrate the importance of race, ethnicity, social class, and gender diversity in our society and the world.
6. An understanding of basic concepts in sociology.
7. An elementary knowledge of sociological research.
8. The capacity to evaluate the dynamics between cultures, the economy and politics.
9. Proficiency in reading and comprehending scholarly texts.
11. Accomplishing sound research techniques and presentation skills.
12. Develop internet and computer skills needed for college-level work.
13. Ability to construct complex ideas and to “connect the dots” of concepts.
14. Develop superb critical thinking skills and be able to think deeply about our social lives.
15. And, above all, enjoy yourself while accomplishing the above tasks.

EXPECTATIONS

Overview of Student Expectations:

1. The core of all expectations for this course is **respect**. I expect that you will respect yourself, your fellow classmates, ideas presented in the classroom, diversity, the instructor and any guests to the classroom. Likewise, I pledge to respect you and your ideas.
2. I consider this classroom to be a safe space free of any types of hate. Any form of racism, sexism, misogyny, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia or other kind of bigotry will NOT be tolerated here. Check your privilege at the door.
3. You are expected **to actively attend each scheduled class**. This means that you are to prepare thoroughly for each class, participate in the class discussion, actively listen and take notes.
4. **You will write your own assignments and cite all external sources**. Cheating and/or plagiarism may result in an automatic failure for the course.
5. **All assignments will be completed with care and scholarly diligence**. Please use complete sentences, refrain from slang, spell and grammar check before turning in any assignments.

If you are to miss a class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student. Room is provided at the bottom of group project handout take down the contact information of your colleagues.

Instructor Expectations:

I pledge to:

1. Be respectful of myself, students, ideas presented in class and classroom guests.
2. Always be prepared for every class.
3. Offer a wide array of opportunities for students to be successful in this course.
4. Exude excitement for topics presented in the course.
5. Offer my support.
6. Be fair and reasonable.
7. Be flexible when needed.
8. Give more than adequate feedback on your performance in the class.

Attendance Expectations:

According to the Norwegian pop band D'Sound, "Bein' there is half the walk." Class discussion in this course is just as important as the readings and assignments, and, alas, if you are not in class, you cannot participate in class discussions. Students are expected to be in class on each day on time. I do not take attendance for the course as I feel you are an adult and should handle that yourself. Do keep in mind that each week of this course costs you about \$82 in tuition fees. I do not take that responsibility lightly and have planned each class session to compliment the readings and work towards the learning outcomes mentioned earlier.

Number of Preparation Hours:

As with any undergraduate course you will take, the calculation to determine the amount of time you need to spend on a course to be successful is to spend two hours outside of class for every hour in class. This is a three credit hour class, which means students should expect to spend **at least** six hours per week outside of class on readings, studying, assignments and journals.

Learning Groups

In the beginning of the semester, you will be placed into learning groups. Your group project will be completed in this group and periodically you will do work with this group. Room is provided on the group project handout to take down the contact information of students in your learning group. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a member of your group.

Technology:

Blackboard and Email:

The use of Blackboard and Email is mandatory for this course. Using Blackboard, students are required to watch videos or link to podcasts, post on the discussion board, and check for notices from the instructor. Likewise, WSU email is the primary way I will communicate with you between class sessions. Please let me know if you have trouble with either of these platforms.

Cell Phones:

Please turn all ringers off. Cell phone conversations and texting are prohibited in the classroom. If you need to use your phone, please leave the classroom to make your phone call or send your text and return promptly. If you must constantly interrupt the classroom to use your phone, I may ask you to leave for the day. These situations will be dealt with on a case-to-case basis.

Laptops and iPads:

I do not encourage students to bring laptops or iPads to class. This isn't because I am opposed to computers in general, but computers can be flirtatious monsters, inviting students to engage in non-class activities such as visiting other websites or checking e-mail, which can distract you and the people around you from what's going on in the classroom. If you must take notes on your laptop, you must ask permission **before** the start of class **and** send your notes you took during class to me via email.

Voice Recorders:

Personally I do not mind lectures being recorded but you will need to notify me before class starts if you'll be recording. This way, I can check with the other students in attendance that day (which should be all of you, by the way) to ensure they are comfortable being recorded. This is because class discussions can get personal in nature, and some students may not feel comfortable being recorded.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

If you are having difficulty in any stage of writing your weekly essays, it is highly suggested that you use the resources the WSU campus has to offer. Please visit the Writing Center in the David Adamany Undergrad Library for assistance with your research assignment.

Writing Center

David Adamany Undergrad Library
Second Floor, Room 2310

Drop In Office Hours

Monday – Tuesday; Thursday 10am – 6pm
Wednesday 10am – 5pm
Friday 11am – 3pm

Website: <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing>

Online appointment scheduling:

<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/OnlineSchedulingInstructions>

Exams

There will be two exams in the semester: one midterm and one final. Exams will include short essay questions, multiple-choice and fill in the blank questions. The final will be cumulative, meaning that it will require you to be able to refer to any information discussed throughout the entire term.

The exams will be administered online via Blackboard, each with a time restriction of 90 minutes. Students should prepare for the exams as if they're taken in the classroom setting so too much time is not wasted looking up responses for each question.

It is highly suggested that students make every effort possible to take each of the two exams on the scheduled date. In the event that a student misses a test, a substitute test will be offered. This will be completed on an agreed upon appointment time with the instructor, and handled on a case-by-case basis

Weekly Readings Reflection

Students are expected to write a one to two page reflexive essay for each week's worth of readings and class sessions, due each Friday as indicated below. You can either submit the essays in class or via Blackboard (no emails please). It can be about anything relating to the reading, personal anecdotes, what you liked or didn't like and so on. I will accept these essays late with a one point per day penalty. The essays are worth 10 points each so it is in your best interest to get them in on time.

Group Presentation Project:

You will be given an assignment this semester where you will lead the class discussion. This will be a group project and group members are responsible for their own part of the presentation. See separate handout for details.

Extra Credit:

Students have several options for earning extra credit in this course. Please note that no extra credit is accepted the final week of class.

1. Students may bring in a newspaper or journal article related to the topic of the day with a short (1-2 paragraph) explanation of how it is relevant to that day's discussion.
2. Attend an activity, presentation or exhibition on a class topic. Then, write up a 1-2 page review on this activity, presentation or exhibition that must be submitted within 72 hours of the event.
3. Creativity can definitely be rewarded in this class. Students can design and submit a creative project that helps illuminate sociology terms, concepts or theories. **Please speak with me before beginning down this path to ensure the project is appropriate for this course. Otherwise, there is no guarantee a submitted creative project will receive credit.**

Each extra credit assignment is worth a max of 10 points and I will accept a maximum of two.

Evaluation of Assessments

Readings Reflection: 10 points each / 7 essay – 70 points total

Group Presentation: 100 points

Midterm Exam: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

Total: 370 points

Grading Scale

100% - 90%	A	72% - 70%	C
89% - 86%	A-	69% - 66%	C-
85% - 83%	B+	65% - 63%	D+
82% - 80%	B	62% - 60%	D
79% - 76%	B-	59% - 51%	D-
75% - 73%	C+		

Anything below this threshold will receive a failure for the course.

Note: I will be diligent about getting grades up on Blackboard in as timely of a fashion as possible. It is up to each student to keep track of her or his marks as the semester goes on. Please see me if you have concerns about your point total or if you are having problems in the course. Do not wait until the last minute to inquire about your grade.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Accommodation Statement

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 about students with disabilities and the services we provide for faculty and students:

<http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Plagiarism Statement

Assignments that have been copied from another student or another source will not be scored. All papers will be run through the SafeAssign plagiarism system which detects attempts at copying text. "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." (*WSU Dean of Students Office Statement, 2014*). The following website gives the university's full policy on academic integrity: <http://doso.wayne.edu/academic-integrity.html>

I understand there are many gray areas when it comes to plagiarism. Don't hesitate to contact me or stop by during office hours if you have questions or need guidance.

A Final Note:

Due to the nature of the topic of this course, some points discussed in class may be controversial, uncomfortable or 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 by either your fellow classmates or me, please feel free to make an appointment to come talk speak with me. I am more than willing to listen to your concerns.

The instructor may make changes to this course outline as needed during the course. Please be attentive for possible modifications and regularly check your Wayne State email.

COURSE TIMELINE

DATE	TOPIC	READING/ASSIGNMENT
<i>Week 1 - Introductions</i>		
Tues May 12	Syllabus Review + Group signup + Intro	<NONE>
Thurs May 14	The Sociological Imagination	Conley, Chapter 1
Fri May 15		1st Essay Due
<i>Week 2 – Socialization</i>		
Tues May 19	Socialization and the Construction of Reality	Conley, Chapter 4
Thurs May 21	Video & Discussion	<NONE>
Fri May 22		2nd Essay Due
<i>Week 3 – Social Control & Deviance</i>		
Tues May 26	Social Control & Deviance	Conley, Chapter 6
Thurs May 28	Video & Discussion	<NONE>
Fri May 29		3rd Essay Due
<i>Week 4 – Inequality</i>		
Tues Jun 2	Stratification	Conley, Chapter 7
Thurs Jun 4	Midterm Exam	<NONE>
Fri Jun 5		4th Essay Due
<i>Week 5 – Gender, Sex and Sexuality</i>		
Tues Jun 9	Gender	Conley, Chapter 8
Thurs Jun 11	Video & Discussion	<NONE>
Fri Jun 12		5th Essay Due
<i>Week 6 – Race</i>		
Tues Jun 16	Race	Conley, Chapter 9
Thurs Jun 18	Video & Discussion	<NONE>
Fri Jun 19		6th Essay Due
<i>Week 7 – Detroit</i>		
Tues Jun 23	Origins of Detroit’s Urban Crisis	Readings on Blackboard
Thurs Jun 25	Video & Discussion	<NONE>
Fri Jun 26		7th Essay Due
<i>Week 8 – Final</i>		
Tues Jun 30th	Final Exam	

IMPORTANT DATES

May 17 th	Last day to drop course with no tuition refund
May 24 th	Last day to drop course without instructor approval
June 4 th	Midterm Exam
June 14 th	Last day to drop course with instructor approval
June 23 rd	Last day to submit extra credit
June 30 th	Final Exam