

Instructor: Dr. Rifaat Dika  
Course: Understanding Human Society- Soc 2000  
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### **Course Description & Learning Strategy**

In this course we will explore the basics and scope of sociology as a social science discipline. Students will learn how to think sociologically rather than “solving the problems of the world!” We will refine our sociological thinking by studying the genealogy, that is, history and origins of sociological thoughts and concepts; sociological research practices and methods in examining different locations of social life and social structures including: culture; self and the others; gender relations; class stratification; crime, violence and war; communication and mass media; and other social, economic and political conditions.

While we will “sample” different locations and look at them from a sociological perspective, we should remember that our main objective in doing so is not the information content itself as much as understanding the way or the logic of sociological analysis in treating this content. This learning strategy will be reflected in our class activities and assignments including: lectures, class practices and exercises, and exams.

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

By completing this course students will learn:

- 1- Basic concepts of sociology as a social science
- 2- Major sociological thinkers and theories
- 3- Sociology as a method and practice
- 4- How to use sociological method to analyze social and cultural issues
- 5- How to conduct a sociological research
- 6- How to write sociological papers

## Course Assignments & Requirements

- (1) *Assigned readings on the syllabus.* Come to class having read the material carefully for discussion and review. At times, assigned readings will be the subject of class lectures and discussions; at times it will be background. Good note-taking will be important in this course for later review and preparation for quizzes and exams.
- (2) *Exams.* There will be 3 major exams given in this course. Exams are based on assigned readings, lecture notes, videos and class handouts. Exams cover all reading material regardless of whether they are covered in class or not. Exams will take multiple-choice format.
- (3) *Research Project.* Class will be divided up into small research groups of 3-4 students. Every group will conduct a research project on a specific social issue in the United States or the world, and write a 8-10 page paper reporting the finding of the research project. The final report should explain (1) what problem/issue it is you are addressing; (2) what the manifestations and history of the problem are, in US society and/or the world; (3) what explanations for the problems there are, whether there are conflicting causal explanations and what is at stake; (4) what interventions have been tried, and how? (5) what do you think would be the most effective current response to this problem and why? (6) what is your standpoint on this issue? (a more detailed guideline on the research project will be provided later)
- (4) *Attendance and Participation.* Class attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will cause a penalty of losing 10 points for each absence. More than 2 unexcused absences will reduce your grade by one level.
- (5) *Events Reports:* Every student is required to report on at least 1 event throughout the course. “Events” mean public issues, debates as reported in the media and can be tied to the sociological content of the course. Example: news reports, articles on crime, poverty, gender...etc. Students will bring such events to class and write a short report of 2 to 3 pages discussing the event and presenting it to class.

## Course Policies & “Taboos”

- Make-up exams are not allowed, except by an agreement with the instructor prior to the exam.
- When students miss a class session, it’s their responsibility to contact the instructor to find out about class assignments during their absence.
- **Using cell phone by any shape and form is an absolute “taboo” in the classroom. So, please turn off your cell phone before you enter the class and forget that you have one. Otherwise you will disturb the class and “provoke” the master and the pupils alike☺**
- Using laptop computers is not allowed in class unless permitted by the instructor during some class activities.

## **Grading Policy**

Your final grade will be based on the following distribution:

Exam I	20 percent
Exam II	20 percent
Exam III	20 percent
Group Research Project	15 percent
Events Reports	5 percent
Attendance and Participation	20 percent

## **Grading Scale**

**A= 100-95**

**A- 94-90**

**B+ 89-86**

**B 85-83**

**B- 81-79**

**C+ 78-76**

**C 75-72**

**C- 71-68**

**D+ 67-64**

**D 63-58**

**D- 57-51**

**E 50-00**

**Textbook: Anthony Giddens and other Authors: Introduction to Sociology:  
Ninth Edition (paperback), W. W. Norton Press**

Recommended: The Dictionary of Sociology, Penguin Publisher

## Course Schedule

This is a tentative schedule that may be adjusted and rearranged during the semester. Students will be notified prior to any change in the schedule.

### January

16                      **Course Overview**

23                      What Is Sociology? Read chapter 1

30                      Read chapters 3 & 4: Culture and Society; Socialization and the Lifecycle

### February

6                        Read chapters 5 & 6: Social Interaction...; Groups, Networks, and Organizations

13                      Read chapter 2: Asking and Answering Sociological Questions

20                      Read chapter 7: Conformity, Deviance, and crime

28                      **EXAM I: Covers chapters 1-7**

### March

6                        Read chapters 8 & 9: Stratification, Class, and Inequality; Global Inequality

13                      Read chapters 10 & 11: Gender Inequality; Ethnicity and Race

### **Spring Break**

27                      Read chapters 12 & 13: Aging; Government, Political Power, And Social Movements

### April

3                        **EXAM II: Covers chapters 8-13**

10                      Read chapters 14 & 15: Work and Economic Life; Families and Intimate Relationships

17                      Read chapters 16 & 17: Education and the Mass Media; Religion in Modern Society

**Group Research Project is due**



