

SOC 101 – Introduction to Society©
Fall 2015

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Office: MH 222K
Office Hours: W 2-3:30pm and by appointment (*I encourage you to schedule an appointment. While Tuesday afternoon is preferable, I have a wide range of availability.*)
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Course Description

As the course title states, this class is intended to introduce you to central issues in society. The course will acquaint you with a number of sociological perspectives and theoretical orientations. By taking this course, you will develop a sense of the range of issues covered by social scientists and the various perspectives and tools used to understand these issues. We will approach this course through the perspective of political economy, which is, by its very nature, an orientation that dissects the world we live in.

Many people in our nation and other nations have misperceptions about how contemporary society operates. Political economy uses scientific investigation to expose the unrecognized forces affecting us in our everyday lives. Because political economy is a scientific analysis of the everyday, it is bound to conflict with the misperceptions and misinformation that many people harbor. This course requires that you confront your long held beliefs and open up your mind to new perspectives regarding the social world.

Some folks find it difficult to let go of their own misperceptions, so if you are close-minded or have strong traditional beliefs, this may not be the course for you. This course, while covering selected topics in society, will attempt to challenge you to think differently about a variety of sociological issues including the media, race/ethnicity and gender. You will be required to understand the world sociologically instead of based on your own misperceptions, which can be challenging to you at times.

Course Objectives

- Students will be familiarized with the basic perspectives in sociology.
- The course will facilitate mastery of basic sociological concepts.
- Students will expand their knowledge of basic sociological issues, including issues of social class, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.
- The course is designed to enable the student to understand sociological issues both in United States' society as well as in the global context.
- This course also encourages students to develop a better understanding of their culture and society and how they fit into it, and to apply the sociological perspective to the analysis of social situations.
- The student should gain a knowledge of cultural and social differences, be able to apply sociology to international issues, and to understand the role of the world citizen.

Required Texts

- *Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach* Fourth Edition
- *Behind the Invasion of Iraq* by the Research Unit for Political Economy

Desire to Learn (D2L)

- Some readings, especially for your quizzes, will be posted on D2L.
- Each week, you will have a quiz over the week's readings and lecture material.
- Be sure to check the D2L regularly for assignments, extra credit opportunities, and homework quizzes.
- Any lecture slides may also be posted on D2L.

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Critical Thinking and General Education

- Many of the issues that we will cover in this course are complex and do not lend themselves to easy answers.
 - Hopefully, you will develop more questions as we progress through the class.
- We will focus on *political economic* views to understanding contemporary issues.
 - Sometimes, the material may make you uncomfortable – this is natural, and it means that you are confronting commonly held beliefs, which is one of the goals of the sociological imagination.
 - We will look at the world from a variety of social science theories to address a number of social issues like the media, workplace dissatisfaction, racism, etc.
 - Some issues that we will cover may appear unfamiliar to some of you.
 - While I understand that it may be new material to some of you, it is rooted in historical sociological analysis and is information firmly acknowledged internationally.
 - For example, an international student asked me why some of the US students were surprised by the content. For her, it was common knowledge and something that some international students had witnessed first-hand.
- This course is designed specifically to meet the goals of the **General Education Requirements** it fulfills.
 - For example, we will “develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues” - one of the goals of Goal Area 5: History and Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - We will also “analyze specific international problems illustrating cultural, economic, ... social and political differences which affect their solution.” Goal Area 9: Global Perspective
 - In this class, I stress that you “understand the role of a world citizen and the responsibility world citizens share for their common global future.” Goal Area 9: Global Perspective
 - This course also helps you “identify the impact of oppression for individuals from diverse populations.” Diverse Cultures - Purple
- Other General Education Requirements
 - In this course, students will be exposed to the methods and theories used by social scientists.
 - The course will look at a number of social institutions, especially the media, economy and others.
 - Students will also be exposed to other cultures and the relations between various cultures within the US and also other regions of the world.
- Any unease you feel regarding these goals or the course content is part of your intellectual growth and a necessary part of expanding your understanding of the world.
 - The purpose of the course is to create a more informed citizen in an increasingly globalized world to better cope with both the personal and social issues looming on the horizon.

Sensitive Course Content

Because social science addresses difficult social issues, the class may cover topics that some people have experienced personally. The following topics may produce anxiety for students who have experienced these social issues.

- *Sociological Perspectives & Classical Sociological Theory - Alienation*
 - During this section, we will discuss issues of food and dietary choices
- *Social Movements and Use of Violence as a Means of Social Control*
 - During these sections, we may address the issues of lynching and military combat, which may include graphic images.
- *Gender and Society and Sexuality*
 - During these sections, we will address issues of sexual assault.
- If you think any of these topics, or others, will be difficult for you to experience, you have a couple options:
 - Since opportunities are provided to improve your grade, you may be able to miss one class (and possibly more) and choose not to come during these subjects.
 - Please feel free to contact me ahead of time to make alternative arrangements.
- If you are personally dealing with these issues or others, I have listed some resources on campus that may provide assistance. If you do not see what you need on this list, I may be able to suggest others.

Course Requirements

For the course, your grade will be based on three components:

- class attendance and participation in class based on homework assignments,
- reading and homework assignment quizzes, and
- weekly quizzes.
- There will be no make-ups for the class participation or homework assignments, but I will drop your lowest grade in the homework and quizzes sections.

- **Attendance and Participation**
 - The class will have a seating chart.
 - You will be expected to attend class and your attendance will be a portion of your grade.
 - You will be called upon randomly to answer questions based on the homework and course content.
- **Reading and Homework Assignment Quizzes**
 - Assignments applying the readings and course material will be posted on D2L.
 - See the “Content” section of D2L for more information.
 - To complete some of the assignments, you must go to the “Quizzes” section.
 - Make sure you have completed the readings prior to beginning the assignment.
 - You will have a limited time to complete these assignments.
 - There will be no make-ups for these assignments.
 - Some accommodations can be made for officially sanctioned activities such as National Guard Duty or university-sponsored activities.
 - * Contact me if your schedule conflicts with a quiz.
- **Quizzes**
 - Quizzes are multiple-choice and are posted weekly in the “Quizzes” section of D2L.
 - Quiz due dates are posted on D2L.
 - Quizzes will be based on the readings and lecture material for the week.
 - There will be no make-ups for the quizzes.
 - Some accommodations can be made for officially sanctioned activities such as National Guard Duty or university-sponsored activities.
 - * Contact me if your schedule conflicts with a quiz.
- **Extra Credit**
 - During the term, a number of on-campus events will be posted on D2L (and announced in class, if possible).
 - Complete the associated assignment (posted in D2L) and you will receive up to 2% toward your final grade.
 - You may attend up to 5 events.
 - Submit your assignment in the Dropbox section of D2L.
 - **Follow the requirements as they are outlined, or you will receive no credit for the assignment.**

Un-Graded Items

- **Homework Assignments**
 - I will hand out assignments during class to facilitate discussion. We will break into groups or you will work on these individually. We will then discuss your answers.
 - You will also find assignments posted on D2L that relate to your readings.
 - These assignments are designed to help you focus on the important concepts in readings to prepare you for your quizzes.
 - Each reading homework will be associated with a survey quiz.
 - They will ask questions that we will examine during class time.
 - They may also include practice questions for your weekly quizzes.

Course Requirements (Continued)

- **Grading for the Course Will Be Based on the Following:**

- 20% Attendance and Participation
- 40% Homework Assignment Quizzes
- 40% Weekly Quizzes

- Grades for the course will use the +/- scale and will have divisions as follows:

- 92 and above = A,
- 91.99 – 90 = A-,
- 89.99 – 88 = B+,
- 87.99 – 82 = B,
- 81.99 – 80 = B-,
- 79.99 – 78 = C+,
- 77.99 – 72 = C,
- 71.99 – 70 = C-,
- 69.99 – 65 = D,
- 64.99 and below = F

- ***Notice that any grade below 65% is an F.***

- I am very willing to help students who are struggling with the course requirements.

- **If your quiz scores, etc. are lower than you would like, come talk to me.**
 - Feel free to make use of my office hours or make an appointment.
- There may be alternative arrangements or other services that can help you improve your scores.
- See also the “Student Needs” section below.

- During class, we will cover issues relevant to the assigned text, but I will not specifically cover the text material during lecture.

- However, feel free to bring up questions regarding what you have read, and I will try to answer them during lecture.

- I am very willing to work with students during the term to improve their grade. Please come see me!

- However, your lack of effort, planning or reluctance to spend the time with me to improve your grade during the term is not my problem - **YOUR FINAL GRADE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!**
 - **DO NOT EMAIL ME AT THE END OF THE TERM REQUESTING THAT I ROUND UP YOUR GRADE!**
 - Begging to be bumped up to the next letter grade will result in your grade being lowered one-half letter grade **for each interaction, email, etc.**

Course Expectations

- Because this course is relatively large, I have certain expectations for you when you are in the classroom.
 - **The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, etc. is not permitted in the classroom.**
 - Other distractions such as text messages, conversations between students, etc. are not permitted.
 - I will stop the class if students are using laptops, checking cell phones, texting, or otherwise distracting other students in the class.
 - If the problem persists, students distracting others will be asked to leave and/or failed for the course.
 - I request that you abide by these expectations, not for my benefit, but for the students around you.

Quality of Work and “Academic Honesty”

- Students are responsible for ensuring that their assignments, essays and general intellectual contributions are their own.
 - In other words, I demand that the students’ contributions are the result of their own creativity and critical assessment of the material covered during this course.
 - I encourage students to study together and discuss the course material outside of class, but do not write your assignments together.
 - You may find the University Academic Honesty Policy here:
<https://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/academichonesty.pdf>
 - Intentional or unintentional similarities in papers, exams, assignments or answers **will result in the students failing the course.**
 - This includes but is not limited to:
 - borrowing portions or whole essays from another source such as a friend, website or “paper mill.”
 - using authors’ ideas without proper credit,
 - submitting a paper that is not your own work,
 - similarities between student papers,
 - completing assignments or quizzes together,
 - copying answers from others in class,
 - using notes during in-class quizzes or exams,
 - submitting work for others such as attendance sign in, review sheets, assignments, quizzes, “clicker” entries, etc.

Students’ Needs

- If you are having trouble in the class understanding the material or doing well on the quizzes, **I encourage you to contact me.**
 - If you are worried about how you are doing in the class, contact me early in the term.
 - If you wait until the middle of the term, it will be too late.
 - There are also resources on campus to aid your study skills and provide tutoring.
 - Check the list of resources on the next page, or ask me about your options.
- Please let me know if you have any need for accommodations in the classroom to meet your needs.
 - I realize that students have different learning styles and different needs.
 - While this is a large class, I will do my best to help you in any way I can.
 - My objective in this course is to get you to look at the world in a different, more sociological, way.
 - My goal is not to “weed out” those who cannot do well on an exam.
 - In this way, I do encourage you to use my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the course material, concerns you may have, or general issues relevant to the course.
- For those of you who may have more specific needs, MSU-Mankato provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in education programs, activities or services.
 - Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in-class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Disability Services (contact info below) and then contact me as soon as possible.

Resources for Students on Campus

There are many resources on campus for students, especially those new to the campus. Below you can find the location and contact information for various services on campus. They are there for you, so take advantage of them. All of these resources are aimed at helping you succeed and excel while you are here. Please ask me if there is anything I can help you find. I may be able direct you to other offices that can help you out.

Tutoring and Other Services for All Students

Center for Academic Success
Memorial Library in ML 125 (lower level)
Phone: 507-389-1791
Email: academicsuccess@mnsu.edu
<http://www.mnsu.edu/success/>

General Information and Help with Study Skills

Student Relations, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Advising "U"
Armstrong Hall 114
Phone No: 507-389-6307
<http://sbs.mnsu.edu/advisingu/advisingu.html>

Resources for International Students

The International Student Office (ISO)
Kearney International Center
250 Centennial Student Union
Phone: 507-389-1281 (V) or 800-627-3529
(MRS/TTY)
E-mail: iss@mnso.edu
<http://www.mnsu.edu/international/>

Facilities and Resources for Students with Disabilities

Office of Disability Services
132 Memorial Library (lower level)
Phone: 507-389-2825 (Voice/TTY)
Email: julie.snow@mnsu.edu
<http://www.mnsu.edu/access/index.html>

Sexual Violence Awareness Education

The Women's Center
218 Centennial Student Union
Phone: (507) 389-6146
<http://www.mnsu.edu/wcenter/>

Diversity Resources

Institutional Diversity
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/>
Institutional Diversity Departments
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/isc/>
Institutional Diversity Events
<http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/activities/>

Resources for First-Generation College Students and Others

Student Support Services
355 Wiecking Center
Phone: (507) 389-2797
<http://www.mnsu.edu/sss/>

Confidential Help to Assist Students in Resolving Personal, Social, and Educational Concerns

The Counseling Center
245 Centennial Student Union (CSU)
Phone: (507) 389-1455
<http://www.mnsu.edu/counseling/>

Student Health Services

Medical Clinic
21 Carkoski Commons
Phone: 507-389-6276
<http://www.mnsu.edu/shs/>

Health Education
100 Carkoski Commons
Phone: 507-389-5689

If you do not see a campus resource on this list, please let me know, and I can add it to future syllabi and my webpage.

Weekly Readings

Readings and Assignments are Due Before Class for the Week Listed
See D2L for Your Weekly Assignments

Week 1 (August 25-27)

Introduction to the Course and Syllabus

Week 2 (September 1-3)

(We Will Not Hold Class Monday, September 1 or Wednesday, September 3)

Why Study Society? - "The Sociological Imagination"

D2L Reading: *Understanding Society: Sociology and The Sociological Imagination*

Week 3 (September 8-10)

Culture and Ethnocentrism

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 3. Society and Culture**

D2L Reading: *Culture: Ethnocentrism and Genocide*

Week 4 (September 15-17)

Socialization and The Filters of the Media

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 4. Socialization**

D2L Reading: *Socialization: Media*

Film: Outfoxed (<http://vimeo.com/24935369>)

Week 5 (September 22-24)

Sociological Perspectives and The Theory of Alienation

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 1. An Introduction to Sociology**

D2L Reading: *Theory: Karl Marx and Alienation*

Week 6 (September 29-October 1)

Social Stratification

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 8. Social Stratification in the United States and the World**

Week 7 (October 6-8)

Structural and Individual Racism

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 9. Race and Ethnicity**

D2L Reading: *Eduardo Bonilla Silva_ Racism Without Racists*

Film: Race: The Power of an Illusion (<https://senema.senecac.on.ca/videos/1983/>)

Week 8 (October 13-15)

Global Political-Economic Institutions

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 13. Politics and the Economy**

D2L Reading: *Politics and the Economy: Economic Institutions and Crisis*

Week 9 (October 20-22)

Social Movements

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 17. Collective Behavior, Social Movements and Social Change**

D2L Reading: Keith Brown *Buying into Fair Trade* (on D2L)

Week 10 (October 27-29)

Social Control

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 7. Deviance and Social Control**

Film: The Whole World Was Watching (<http://video.kcts9.org/video/1493266255/>) Also found on D2L.

Week 11 (November 3-5)

Iraq War

Behind the Invasion of Iraq by the Research Unit for Political Economy **Chapter 2. Western Imperialism and Iraq (pages 19-54)**

D2L Reading: *Defense Planning Documents*

Week 12 (November 10-12)

Gender, Sexuality, and Society

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 10. Inequality and Stratification by Sexual Orientation, Gender and Age**

Week 13 (November 17-19)

People and the Environment

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 16. Urban and Environmental Sociology**

Film: The Story of Stuff (<http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/>)

Week 14 (November 24-26)

(Thanksgiving Break, We Will Not Hold Class Unless Needed for a makeup day)

Week 15 (December 1-3)

Contemporary Education in the US

Introduction to Sociology: A Collaborative Approach **Chapter 12. Education and Religion**

D2L Reading: *No Corporation Left Behind*

Film: *Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk*

(<http://documentarylovers.com/film/declining-by-degrees-higher-education-at-risk/>)

Final Exam Week

(No final, but may be used if needed for a makeup day.)