

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

SOCIOLOGY 101: Introduction to Sociology

“We don’t receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.” --Marcel Proust

Professor: A. Comte

Office: Root Hall Catacombs # 402

Phone: 555-0000

Email: ubet@isu.edu

Office Hours: 3-4:00 some days

Text: *Sociology* (David M. Newman; 7th ed; Pine Forge Press)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociologists study human behavior and the organization of society. Sociologists assume that social forces external to individuals shape a great deal of behavior. Sociologists use a scientific approach; and, therefore, rigor is needed to understand and explain these forces and make valid predictions concerning how they shape behavior within social groups. Also, many sociologists work to develop knowledge that will inform the improvement of public policy.

This course will introduce you to this scientific discipline by examining its history, the work of its early and contemporary contributors, essential concepts, research methods, theory and applications. I hope you will come to see how sociology can assist you in improving your understanding and quality of social life as we explore the following:

- essential terminology and assumptions central to the sociological perspective
- sociological “ways of knowing” to develop your “sociological imagination”
- how culture, socialization, and social structure affect human behavior
- the application of sociological perspectives to the study of social class, race/ethnicity, & sex/gender
- how sociologists examine the primary institutions of society
- how sociological perspectives help us to understand ourselves as social beings

Importantly, understanding this content will not only provide you with knowledge of sociology but serves as a foundation for broader learning goals.

FOUNDATIONAL STUDIES GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This course fulfills a Foundational Studies (General Education—FS) requirement for a course in the Social & Behavioral Sciences (SBS). (A listing of FS learning objectives can be found at www.indstate.edu/gened/newfoundationalstudiesprogram.htm). SOC 101 is designed to meet the following goals and objectives:

Foundational Studies Program Learning Objectives:

- *Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;
- *Critically evaluate the ideas of others;
- *Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history);
- *Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies;
- *Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context;
- *Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

[Note: These general goals are largely recapitulated in the specific SBS learning objectives and/or applied learning skills. Thus, this is included only to promote students' awareness of the broad goals of general education and to justify the inclusion of social & behavioral sciences within the framework of a general education program.]

Specific Learning Objectives for Social & Behavioral Science Courses: As a result of courses in the Social & Behavioral Sciences, students will be able to:

1. Describe how individual choices and/or evolving social institutions affect human decision-making;
2. Utilize discipline-specific methodologies to predict an individual or social outcome;
3. Connect discipline-specific content and methodology to contemporary social issues; and
4. Explain how the specific discipline informs and contributes to other disciplines.

This course promotes all four SBS objectives. As noted in the Schedule of Topics [FS reviewers, see the accompanying narrative], we will explore core concepts in sociology, including the nature of our social institutions and how they affect and are affected by individual choices; how sociologists gather data to discover general principles of behavior; and apply the principles to understand conditions of our society and promote social change. We will also learn that the specialized study of many social phenomena begins with understanding sociology.

Applied Skill Learning: The scientific study of sociology also promotes skills in critical thinking and information literacy (e.g., finding “facts” and reflecting on their origin and possible interpretations). These skills will be further honed through written assignments that require summary and reflection on important concepts as well as peer discussions.

These activities should also enhance your ability to communicate effectively about society generally and sociology in particular.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES & NOTES

1. **Academic Dishonesty:** All written assignments and exams are expected to be a student's own work. Evidence of cheating will result in a failing grade for an assignment or exam and a report forwarded to Student Judicial Programs (Receipt of two such reports by SJP will generate basis for a conduct hearing that can result in your suspension or expulsion from Indiana State University). Please review the University's Academic Dishonesty Policy found at < www.indstate.edu/academicintegrity/studentguide.pdf >

2. **Disability Policy:** Indiana State University seeks to provide effective services and accommodation for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Disability Support Services at the beginning of the semester. Go to Gillum Hall, Room 202A or call 237-2301. The Director will ensure that you receive all the additional help that Indiana State offers. *If you will require assistance during an emergency evacuation, notify your instructor immediately. Look for evacuation procedures posted in your classrooms.*

3. **Laptop Policy:** It is assumed that you are in compliance with the university's laptop policy. You are not required to bring your laptop to this particular class, although you are free to bring it if you desire. On occasion, I may request that those who have laptops bring them to assist in small group activities. If you bring your laptop to class, please be prepared to run it on battery during class sessions. Note that, if you do bring a laptop to class, it is expected that you will use it for taking notes or assisting with group activities in this course. Any other use (e.g., surfing the net, checking email, chatting, or working on assignments for another class) will result in your being instructed to shut it off. Failure to comply with this direction will be viewed as a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. For more information, see: <www.indstate.edu/sjp/docs/code.pdf>

4. **Academic Freedom:** Academic freedom is a principle that allows teachers the ability to discuss their subject as they see appropriate in order to insure student learning, which includes not only the learning of facts, but the ability to think critically about those facts and to discuss their meaning from a variety of perspectives. This principle is essential to this course. As a discipline, the field of sociology attempts to objectively examine the nature of societies (including our own), and this may entail an examination of some of the assumptions that serve to organize our culture and guide our behavior. Some discussions may be controversial, but it is important that we are able to have them in order to understand the people that we are and that we want to be.

For more information, I would invite you to read the statement on academic freedom produced by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP): <www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>

5. Citation Style: Most of the written assignments will use a flexible, narrative writing style, much like a standard composition. However, some assignments might require using the APA citation style, and this will be specifically noted on such assignments. If you are uncertain about stylistic expectations on any written work, please ask me.

6. Attendance and Participation: Because this course is structured around an active approach to learning, *attendance is very important to your success. Students will be allowed 3 absences during the course of the semester. Any subsequent absences—whatever the reason—will be considered "unexcused" and will result in a 10% penalty on any writing assignments due that week.* Late assignments will also be assessed a 10% penalty.

[FS reviewers: Instructors may choose *alternate modes* for handling attendance, e.g., including attendance & participation points in their grading scale or delineating "excused/unexcused" reasons for absence. On-line instructors, in particular, are likely to have an alternate criteria.]

7. Civility: Consistent with #4 above, it is expected that students will conduct *all interactions* in a civil, respectful, and tolerant manner. The objective of *critique* is to assess, evaluate, and improve ideas, not to engage in personalized attacks.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Written Assignments: Each student will prepare 12 writing assignments. Each assignment involves a specific reading and selecting three ideas that are briefly restated or paraphrased and then followed by a reflection. It is important to bring these writing assignments to class where they are read and additional writing is added.

Students read and critically discuss each other's material during class usually once a week in small groups. This will follow a seminar model and will enhance the understanding of concepts and terminological sophistication.

As stated above, these written assignments are designed to encourage Foundational Studies learning objectives to promote critical thinking (including critical evaluation of each others' ideas), information literacy (including seeking and understanding the origin of "facts"), as well as effective communication. Although the primary goal is content-based, students should know that *excessive* compositional errors (e.g., in grammar, spelling, construction, syntax, etc.) will be considered when assigning a grade on written assignments.

[FS reviewers: These assignments require students to reflect on substantive topics, and through the peer critiques and discussion, to consider alternative interpretations that challenge their thinking (Critical Thinking), require them to find and evaluate empirical support for their opinions (Information Literacy), and better communicate their ideas (Effective Communication). These activities will also be used to monitor students' accomplishments of SBS learning objectives 1-4. Focused on core sociological content, these activities will require that students consider and articulate the relationship between individuals and the institutions under discussion (SBS: 1), social issues/problems created/supported by these institutions (SBS: 3), consider how changes in these institutions would represent a different society (SBS: 2), and explore the relationships between sociological knowledge and that represented by other disciplines (SBS: 4). For instance, in readings about the family, students will encounter information on changes in the American family over the

last century; reflections are likely to consider the correspondence between broader social and political changes and individual decisions regarding family structure (SBS: 1, 3, 4) and whether new patterns are emerging (SBS: 2).]

2. **Exams:** There are three tests of equal value and each covers a specific amount of reading and class material. The final test is not cumulative. Make-ups are given at the instructor's discretion. If you miss a scheduled test, you must request (in writing) a make-up test. If granted, it will be taken during the University-scheduled final exam period for the course.

Exams may include multiple choice, short-answer, or essay questions. The exams are designed to assess your learning of core sociological concepts and your ability to relate them to contemporary life (your own, your peers', and your culture's). Multiple choice questions will not only require your recall of specific sociological facts, but also your ability to generalize from those facts to new situations; short-answer questions may tap specific knowledge of information as well as your ability to concisely summarize critical components of a theory (e.g., the pieces that are “transferable” from situation to situation), and essay questions will require you to organize and synthesize a variety of information in a creative way and to apply it to understanding a social issue or problem. Note that some instructors allot a portion of points for “overall writing quality” in recognition that effective communication is a foundation for application of knowledge.

[FS reviewers: Instructors may choose any variant of examination strategies they deem appropriate to assess the learning of sociological content as long as they manifest a commitment to go beyond simple recall of facts to require assimilation and application of knowledge and assess achievement of FS learning and applied skills objectives. This will be monitored through regular course/program assessment and through regular review of FS syllabi by the Department Chair, Departmental Curriculum Committee, and/or Coordinator of GE/FS].

COURSE GRADING

Grade Calculation: The course grade is based upon the following calculation:

$$\begin{array}{r} 12 \text{ Writing Assignments} = 34\% \\ 3 \text{ Tests (22\% each)} = \underline{66\%} \\ \hline 100\% \end{array}$$

Grading Scale

97% = A+;	93% = A;	90% = A-
87% = B+;	83% = B;	80% = B-
77% = C+;	74% = C;	70% = C-
67% = D+;	63% = D;	60% = D-
Below 60% = F		

[FS reviewers: Instructors are free to vary the number and weighting of various assignments to suit their own instructional methods and platform, again as long as they commit to and demonstrate the meeting the specified learning objectives.]

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

Dates	Topics/Concepts	Assignments
Jan 13, 15	sociological perspective; science ^{1,3}	TEXT(pp2-53) ^{2,4}
Jan 20, 22	culture, cultural relativity ^{2,6}	TEXT(pp54-77) ^{1,2}
Jan 27, 29	socialization & social interaction ^{1,6}	TEXT(pp78-127) ^{1,2}
Feb 03, 05	mass media & deviance ²	TEXT(pp128-181) ^{1,3}
Feb 10, 12	social control & review	Test #1: pp2-151 + class material ¹⁰
Feb 17, 19	stratification & poverty ^{1,3,6,7}	TEXT(pp182-209) ^{1,3}
Feb 24, 26	global inequality ^{1,6,7}	TEXT(pp210-233) ^{1,3}
Mar 03, 05	race & ethnicity ^{1,2,3,6,7}	TEXT(pp234-263) ^{1,3}
Mar 17, 19	stratification by gender ^{1,2,3,6,7}	TEXT(pp264-285) ^{1,3}
Mar 24, 26	review	Test#2: pp182-285 + class material ¹⁰
Mar 31, 02	family & intimacy ^{2,6,7}	TEXT(pp286-309) ^{1,3}
Apr 07, 09	education & religion ^{1,2,6,7}	TEXT(pp310-341) ^{1,3}
Apr 14, 16	government & economy ^{1,3,6,7}	TEXT(pp342-369) ^{1,3}
Apr 21, 23	health, medicine, & environment ^{1,3,6,7}	TEXT(pp370-397) ^{1,3}
Apr 28, 30	^{2,3,7} social change & review ^{2,4}	
FINAL at 1:00, May 05 >>> Final Exam >>>		Test #3: pp286-419 + class material ¹⁰

[FS reviewers: superscripts under “topics/concepts” above identify relevant FS learning objectives. Superscripts under “assignments” above identify SBS objectives 1-4 most closely—though not exclusively—associated with each section of material. For instance, consider that a discussion of the possibilities for social change—the last topic for the course—requires an ability to examine data to identify "social problems" (FS SBS: 3), an understanding of the relations between individuals and broader social institutions (FS SBS: 1) that contribute to or cause the problems, an ability to think about alternatives and make predictions regarding the impacts of interventions (FS SBS: 2), and a discussion of specialized disciplines and institutions through which change could be accomplished (e.g., Criminal Justice system & Criminology; Social Service system & Social Work; Political system & Political Science; Mass Media & Communication/Psychology; etc).

Note that the mechanisms for supporting/achieving these learning goals are many. First, is the assignment of text & readings and substantive class presentations that incorporate examples of and from familiar social institutions (whose impact on students own lives has likely gone unnoticed). Second are reflective thinking/writing assignments that facilitate considered discussion of these topics—see greater detail below, and third, through challenging examinations that demand not only rote recall of facts, but understanding of their origin and the ability to apply them to novel contexts. These latter two are also graded assignments that provide for assessment of these goals.]

1. Due dates for *writing assignments* are ‘boxed’ above. There are 12 assignments.

2. **Test dates:** Test #1, Feb. 12th

Test #2, Mar. 26th

Final, May 5 (Tuesday), 1:00 pm

3. **MLK Service Day;** Jan 19th; report at Noon, Dede 3, HMSU.

*Human Rights Day <www.indstate.edu/hrd> April 20th ; programs all day, HMSU

[FS Reviewer: Instructors may vary in requirements for participation in and in awarding credit for MLK and HRD activities. Online instructors, for instance, are unlikely to have such a requirement, but may engage students in these issues in other ways.]