

Sociology 180-1/ 150-1: Sociology
Spring 2009
MW 15:30-16:45
Room TBA

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Course description

This course introduces students to sociology, the interpretive study of the structures and patterns of collective human existence. Students are provided with a survey of the leading theoretical frameworks and main analytic concepts of the discipline; accordingly, they are furnished with a basic sense of what questions sociologists typically address and, more critically, the trademark manner in which sociologists do so.

The relevance of sociology in the Twenty-first Century depends on the ability of the discipline to offer its unique perspective on two phenomena increasingly shaping the fate of human groups all over the world: intensifying global interconnectedness (*a.k.a.* “globalization”) and emerging environmental crises (*e.g.* looming fossil energy shortages and prospective catastrophic climate change). More so than might normally be the case in an Introduction to Sociology course, then, this course will pay special attention to the global system as a unit of analysis in the sociological enterprise, to transnational subject matter, and to the social dynamics and consequences of human transformation of the natural environment.

Course objectives

1. To introduce students to the essential concepts, theories, and methods used in sociology to analyze social phenomena.
2. To enable students to identify and examine sociologically relevant problems and issues.
3. To encourage critical thinking and debating skills that demonstrate the students’ abilities to understand and analyze social issues.
4. To enhance students’ understanding and appreciation of the complexity of social life and global issues.

Texts

- Ferrante, Joan. 2007. *Sociology: A Global Perspective*. Seventh Edition. Thomson/Wadsworth.

Assessment

Participation in discussion will count 30% of the overall course grade; if students make a sincere and visible effort to contribute comments that reflect thoughtful engagement with course material, they will earn full credit for participation.

Students have to make a short presentation (5 minutes). It will be worth 30% of the overall course grade.

The final exam will be worth 40% of the overall course grade.

Expected academic background

Lectures and assignments are pitched at a level where no prior exposure to college-grade courses in the social sciences is assumed.

Policies

A student's attendance record will be used to adjudicate cases in which his/her final grade rests on the boundary between a higher and a lower grade; in this type of situation, students with three or less unexcused absences will be given the benefit of the doubt.

Students should disable all cell phones, handheld video games, MP3 players, and other electronic and wireless gadgets before entering the classroom!

Schedule

April 6. Introduction to the course; The Sociological Imagination.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 1.

April 13, 15, 20. Sociological Theories.

April 22. Methods of Social Research.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 2: 52-65.

April 27, May 7. Culture.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 3.

May 8, 11: Socialization.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 4.

May 13, 18: Social Organization.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 6.

May 20, 25: Deviance, Conformity, and Social Control.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 7.

May 27, June 1: Social Stratification.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 8.

June 3, 8: Race and Ethnic Classification.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 9.

June 10, 15: Gender.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 10.

June 17, 22: Family and Aging.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 12.

June 24, 29: Population and Urbanization.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 13.

July 1, 6: Education.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 14.

July 8, 13: Religion.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 15.

July 15, 22: Social Change.

Reading: Ferrante, Chapter 16.

Date and time to be announced: review for Final exam.

July 27: Final exam.